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DEVELOPING YOUR OWN WRITING STYLE

Note de curs la disciplina

STUDII LINGVISTICE

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Cuvânt înainte

Misiunea principală a cursului de studii lingvistice o reprezintă dezvoltarea intelectuală, a competenţelor cognitive, aplicativ-practice şi de comunicare a studenţilor, în vederea dobândirii de către aceştia a unei optime calificări profesionale. Acest curs facilitează atât asimilarea de cunoştinţe, cât şi formarea de competenţe şi abilităţi necesare unei reale creşteri intelectuale de natură să le permită absolvenţilor să răspundă cerinţelor pieţei muncii, să dezvolte iniţiative proprii în domeniul lingvisticii. Cursul de studii lingvistice are scopul de a consolida regulile şi reprezentările care stau la baza structurii limbii engleze şi ceea ce acestea dezvăluie despre principiile generale care determină forma şi dezvoltarea acestei limbi.

Cursul *Developing Your Own Writing Style* cuprinde 13 teme şi reprezintă o gamă de teme, care, în unele cazuri, aprofundează cunoştinţele acumulate anterior (utilizarea corectă a unor părţi de vorbire), iar în alte cazuri, introduce câteva teme fundamentale abordate de aceasta disciplina (acordul dintre părţile de propoziţie, importanţa punctuaţiei, cuvintele şi expresiile ce trebuie a fi evitate, dezvoltarea stilului propriu de a scrie etc.). Din necesitatea restrângerii impuse de durata cursului (doar un semestru), selectarea tematicii a ţinut cont de criteriul utilităţii imediate pentru studenţii din anul III în perspectiva faptului că aceştia vor fi angajaţi fie în calitate de profesori, fie în calitate de traducători sau lingvişti.

Conţinutul propriu-zis al unităţilor de învăţare corespunde curriculum-ului disciplinei. Fiecare unitate de învăţare constă din prezentarea unui material teoretic urmat de o serie de exerciţii orientate spre verificarea cunoaşterii, aplicării şi integrării materialului învăţat conform obiectivelor formulate în curriculum. Divizarea materialului în unităţi facilitează învăţarea graduală şi structurată.

Using Pronouns Correctly

- *The Pronoun and Its Classification*
- *Overview of Pronoun Case*
- *Using Correct Pronoun Reference*
- *The Generic Masculine Pronoun*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Choose the sentence with the correct pronoun:

1. A) Her went to the store.
   B) She went to the store.
2. A) It was her.
   B) It was she.
3. A) We talked to him.
   B) We talked to he.
4. A) It is I.
   B) It is me.
5. A) Talk to they before making a decision.
   B) Talk to them before making a decision.
6. A) Can you go with we?
   B) Can you go with us?
7. A) Saleha and she have quit the team.
   B) Saleha and her have quit the team.
8. A) They asked him and I to join the staff.
   B) They asked he and me to join the staff.
   C) They asked him and me to join the staff.
   D) They asked he and I to join the staff.
9. A) That call was for I, not he.
   B) That call was for me, not him.
   C) That call was for me, not he.
   D) That call was for I, not him.
10. A) You didn't tell we that they were here first.

B) You didn't tell us that them were here first.
C) You didn't tell us that they were here first.
D) You didn't tell we that them were here first.

- ***The Pronoun and Its Classification***

A **pronoun** is a word used in place of a noun or another pronoun. A pronoun receives its meaning from the noun it replaces, called the **antecedent.** A pronoun usually refers to something earlier in the text (its **antecedent**) and must agree in number — singular/plural — with the thing to which it refers.

Personal Pronouns

Unlike English nouns, which usually do not change form except for the addition of an *-s* ending to create the plural or the apostrophe + *s* to create the possessive, personal pronouns (which stand for persons or things) change form according to their various uses within a sentence. Thus *I* is used as the subject of a sentence (I am happy.), *me* is used as an object in various ways (He hit me. He gave me a book. Do this for me.), and *my* is used as the possessive form (That's my car.) The same is true of the other personal pronouns: the singular you and he/she/it and the plural we, you, and they. These forms are called **cases**.

When a personal pronoun is connected by a conjunction to another noun or pronoun, its case does not change. We would write "*I am taking a course in Asian history*"; if Talitha is also taking that course, we would write "*Talitha and I are taking a course in Asian history*." (Notice that Talitha gets listed before "I" does. This is one of the few ways in which English is a "polite" language.) The same is true when the object form is called for: "*Professor Vendetti gave all her books to me*"; if Talitha also received some books, we'd write "*Professor Vendetti gave all her books to Talitha and me*."

When a pronoun and a noun are combined (which will happen with the plural first- and second-person pronouns), choose the case of the pronoun that would be appropriate if the noun were not there.

- *We* students are demanding that the administration give us two hours for lunch.

- The administration has managed to put *us* students in a bad situation.

Demonstrative Pronouns

The family of demonstratives (*this/that/these/those/such*) can behave either as pronouns or as determiners.

As pronouns, they identify or point to nouns.

- *That* is incredible! (referring to something you just saw)
- I will never forget *this*. (referring to a recent experience)
- *Such* is my belief. (referring to an explanation just made)

As determiners, the demonstratives adjectivally modify a noun that follows. A sense of relative distance (in time and space) can be conveyed through the choice of these pronouns/determiners:

- These [pancakes sitting here now on my plate] are delicious.
- Those [pancakes that I had yesterday morning] were even better.

When used as subjects, the demonstratives, in either singular or plural form, can be used to refer to objects as well as persons.

- This is my father.
- That is my book.

Relative Pronouns

The relative pronouns (*who/whoever/which/that*) relate groups of words to nouns or other pronouns (The student *who* studies hardest usually does the best.). The word *who* connects or relates the subject, *student*, to the verb within the dependent clause (*studies*). Generally, we use "which" to introduce clauses that are parenthetical in nature (i.e., that can be removed from the sentence without changing the essential meaning of the sentence). For that reason, a "which clause" is often set off with a comma or a pair of commas. "That clauses," on the other hand, are usually deemed indispensable for the meaning of a sentence and are not set off with commas. The pronoun *which* refers to things; *who* (and its forms) refers to people; *that* usually refers to things, but it can also refer to people.

One of the most frequently asked questions about grammar is about choosing between the various forms of the pronoun *who*: *who, whose, whom, whoever, whomever*. The number (singular or plural) of

the pronoun (and its accompanying verbs) is determined by what the pronoun refers to; it can refer to a singular person or a group of people:

- The person who hit my car should have to pay to fix the damages.
- The people who have been standing in line the longest should get in first.

To choose correctly among the forms of *who*, re-phrase the sentence so you choose between *he* and *him*. If you want *him*, write *whom*; if you want *he*, write *who*.

- **Who** do you think is responsible? (Do you think *he* is responsible?)
- **Whom** shall we ask to the party? (Shall we ask *him* to the party?)
- Give the box to **whomever** you please. (Give the box to *him*.)
- Give the box to **whoever** seems to want it most. (*He* seems to want it most. [And then the clause "whoever seems to want it most" is the object of the preposition "to."])
- **Whoever** shows up first will win the prize. (*He* shows up first.)

Now, some guidelines:

- *Who* or *whoever* is used when the pronoun is the subject of a verb: *Who* won the Nobel Prize this year?

- *Who* or *whoever* is used when the pronoun is the predicate nominative: The winner was *who?*

- W*hom* or *whomever* is used when the pronoun is the direct object of a verb or the object of a preposition: *Whom* did he fire this week?

'Who' or 'whom'?

There is a continuing debate in English usage about when you should use **who** and when to use **whom**. According to the rules of formal grammar, **who** should be used in the subject position in a sentence, while **whom** should be used in the object position, and also after a preposition. For example:

Who *made this decision?* [here, **who** is the subject of the sentence]

Whom *do you think we should support?* [here, **whom** is the object of **support**]

To ***whom*** *do you wish to speak?* [here, **whom** is following the preposition **to**]

Some people do still follow these rules but there are many more who never use **whom** at all. Common practice in current English is to use **who** in all contexts, i.e.:

Who *do you think we should support?*

Who *do you wish to speak to?*

Indefinite Pronouns

The indefinite pronouns (*everybody/anybody/somebody/all/each/every/some/none/one*) do not substitute for specific nouns but function themselves as nouns (*Everyone* is wondering if *any* is left.)

One of the chief difficulties we have with the indefinite pronouns lies in the fact that "everybody" feels as though it refers to more than one person, but it takes a singular verb. (*Everybody* <u>*is*</u> *accounted for*.) The indefinite pronouns *anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, someone, somebody, no one,* and *nobody* are always singular. The indefinite pronoun *none* can be either singular or plural, depending on its context. *None* is nearly always plural (meaning "not any") except when something else in the sentence makes us regard it as a singular (meaning "not one"), as in "*None of the food is fresh.*" *Some* can be singular or plural depending on whether it refers to something countable or uncountable.

Intensifying Pronouns

-***self*** forms are used with reflexive and intensive situations.

The intensifying pronouns (such as *myself, yourself, herself, ourselves, themselves*) consist of a personal pronoun plus *self* or *selves* and emphasize a noun. (I *myself* don't know the answer.) It is possible (but rather unusual) for an intensifying pronoun to precede the noun it refers to. (Myself, I don't believe a word he says.)

Reflexive Pronouns

The reflexive pronouns (which have the same forms as the intensifying pronouns) indicate that the sentence subject also

receives the action of the verb. (*Students who cheat on this quiz are only hurting themselves. You paid yourself a million dollars? She encouraged herself to do well*.) What this means is that whenever there is a reflexive pronoun in a sentence there must be a person to whom that pronoun can "reflect." In other words, the sentence "Please hand that book to myself" would be incorrect because there is no "I" in that sentence for the "myself" to reflect to (and we would use "me" instead of "myself"). A sentence such as "I gave that book to myself for Christmas" might be silly, but it would be correct.

Reflexive pronouns are not used in place of subjects and objects:

*The boss and (**myself, I**) had a meeting.*

Answer: Use the pronoun I, not the reflexive form. Therefore, the sentence reads:

"The boss and ***I*** had a meeting."

The inappropriate reflexive form has a wonderful name: the *untriggered reflexive.* "Myself" tends to sound weightier, more formal, so it has a way of sneaking into sentences where it doesn't belong.

- *Bob and myself* I are responsible for this decision.
- These decisions will be made by *myself* me.
- If you have any questions, please contact *myself* me or Bob Jones.

Reciprocal Pronouns

The reciprocal pronouns are *each other* and *one another*. They are convenient forms for combining ideas. If Bob gave Alicia a book for Christmas and Alicia gave Bob a book for Christmas, we can say that *they gave each other books* (or that *they gave books to each other*).

If more than two people are involved (let's say a whole book club), we would say that *they gave one another books.*

• *Overview of Pronoun Case*

Case refers to the form of a noun or pronoun that shows how it is used in a sentence. Only two parts of speech, nouns and pronouns, have *case.* This means that they change form depending on how they are used in a sentence. English has three cases: *nominative, objective,* and *possessive.*

In the *nominative* case, the pronoun is used as a subject: ***I*** *threw the ball*.

In the *objective* case, the pronoun is used as an object: *Give the ball to* ***me***.

In the *possessive* case, the pronoun is used to show ownership: *The ball is* ***mine***.

The following chart shows the three cases of personal pronouns:

Nominative (Pronoun as subject)	**Objective** (Pronoun as object)	**Possessive** (Ownership)
I	me	my, mine
you	you	your, yours
he	him	his
she	her	her, hers
it	it	its
we	us	our, ours
they	them	their, theirs
who	whom	whose
whoever	whomever	whoever

To avoid errors in personal pronoun use, one should understand how to use each case.

Using the Nominative Case

1. The pronoun in the nominative case shows the subject of a verb.

a) *Father and (I, me)* like to shop at flea markets.

Answer: I is the subject of the sentence. Therefore, the pronoun is in the nominative case: "Father and *I* like to shop at flea markets."

To help determine the correct pronoun, the first subject should be taken away and each choice will be tested to see which one sounds better. For example: 1) *I* like to shop at flea markets. 2) *Me* like to shop at flea markets.

The first one sounds better.

b) *(Who, Whom)* do you believe is the better shopper?

Answer: Who is the subject of the verb *is.* Therefore, the sentence would read, "*Who* do you believe is the better shopper?"

Such interrupting expressions as *do you believe, you think, do you suppose* (and so on) will be ignored. They do not affect pronoun case.

2. The pronoun in the nominative case is used in compound subjects.

He and Margo will enter the health and science fair.

Jackie and I plan to chart the constellations.

When *I* is a part of the compound subject, it comes after the other parts of the subject.

3. The pronoun in the nominative case is used for a predicate nominative.

A *predicate nominative* is a noun or pronoun that follows a linking verb and identifies or renames the subject. A *linking verb* is a verb that connects the subject to the complement. They are sometimes called copula or copular verbs.

E.g.: That food *smells* good. ('Smells' connects the subject to the adjective that describes it.)

Linking verbs indicate a state of being (*am, is, are,* etc.), relate to the senses (*look, smell, taste,* etc.), or indicate a condition (*appear, seem, become,* etc.).

The salesman of the month was *(I, me).*

Answer: Use *I,* since the pronoun renames the subject, the salesman of the month. "The salesman of the month was *I.*"

Which is correct: "It is *I*" or "It is *me*"? Technically, the correct form is "It is I," since we're dealing with a predicate nominative. However, "It is me" (and "It is us") has become increasingly acceptable as standard usage.

Using the Objective Case

1. The pronoun in the objective case shows a direct object.

A *direct object* is a noun or pronoun that receives the action:

a) John's suit no longer fits *(he, him).*

Answer: John's suit no longer fits *him.*

b) *(Who, Whom)* did she finally invite to the dinner party?

Answer: She is the subject, the person doing the action. Therefore, the sentence should read: "*Whom* did she finally invite to the dinner party?"

c) Of course, she can invite *(whoever, whomever)* she wants.

Answer: Of course, she can invite *whomever* she wants.

2. The pronoun in the objective case shows an indirect object.

An *indirect object* tells *to* or *for* whom something is done. A word is an indirect object if *to* or *for* can be inserted before it without changing the meaning. For example:

"The book gave *(to)* my boss and *(to)* me some new strategies."

The bill gave *(we, us)* a shock.

Answer: The bill gave *us* a shock.

3. The pronoun in the objective case shows the object of a preposition.

A preposition is a small word that links a noun or a pronoun following it to another word in the sentence: Sit by *(I, me)*.

Answer: The pronoun is the object of the preposition *me,* so the sentence reads: "Sit by *me.*"

4. The pronoun in the objective case is used in compound objects.

Would you tell her and James what time it will begin?

Astronomy interests him and me.

When *me* is part of the compound object, it comes after the other parts of the object.

Using the Possessive Case

1. The pronoun in the possessive case shows ownership.

The child refused to admit that the sweater was *(her's, hers*).

Answer: Hers is the correct spelling of the possessive case, which is needed here to express ownership (*belonging to her*). Therefore, the sentence should read: "The child refused to admit that the sweater was *hers.*"

2. The pronoun in the possessive case is used before gerunds.

A *gerund* is a form of a verb that acts as a noun. Gerunds always end in *-ing,* and they always function as nouns:

a) *(You, Your)* walking in the rain didn't cause your cold.

Answer: The gerund *walking* requires the possessive pronoun *your.* Therefore, the sentence should read: "*Your* walking in the rain didn't cause your cold."

b) Do you mind *(my, me)* borrowing your cell phone?

Answer: Do you mind *my* borrowing your cell phone?

3. The pronoun in the possessive case (the absolute form) is used alone to show ownership.

This cell phone is *mine,* not *yours.*

Using Pronouns in Apposition

A pronoun used in apposition with a noun is in the same case as the noun. An *appositive phrase* is a noun or pronoun that renames another word that precedes it, usually intended to give further explanation or definition that adds information and details.

The president of the council, Mr. Johnson, made a new law.

Appositives can often be removed from the sentence, so they are set off with commas. The appositive in the following sentence is underlined: Two police officers, *Alice and (she, her),* were commended for bravery.

Answer: The pronoun must be in the nominative case (*she*) because it is in apposition with the noun *police officers,* which is in the nominative case. Therefore, the sentence should read: Two police officers, Alice and *she,* were commended for bravery.

Exception: *A pronoun used as the subject of an infinitive is in the objective case.* For example: "Juan expects Luz and *(I, me)* to host the reception." The correct pronoun here is *me,* since it is the subject of the infinitive *to host.*

- ***Using Correct Pronoun Reference***

The meaning of a pronoun comes from its antecedent, the noun or pronoun to which it refers. One's speech and writing will be confusing if the pronoun reference is unclear. Carelessly placed pronouns can create unintentionally funny sentences as well as confusing ones. Let

us consider the difference between what the writer *thinks* he or she said and what is *really* being said in the following sentences:

a) Last week, a wart appeared on my right thumb, and I want *it* removed. (Are you removing the wart or the thumb?)

b) Guilt and unkindness can be emotionally destructive to you and your friends. You must get rid of *them.* (Are you getting rid of the guilt or your friends?)

There are three ways to prevent pronoun confusion.

1. A pronoun must clearly refer to a single antecedent.

2. A pronoun must be placed close to its antecedent.

3. A pronoun must clearly refer to a definite antecedent.

Let's look at each guideline in detail.

1. *A pronoun must clearly refer to a single antecedent*. A common writing and speech problem occurs when the same pronoun refers to more than one antecedent. For instance, in the last example in the previous section, *them* can refer to *guilt, unkindness,* or *your friends.* We should remember that a pronoun replaces a noun. To make sure that the writing and speech are clear, the noun should always be used first before the pronoun is used. The sentence can be made clear by replacing the unclear pronouns with nouns. That way, all the remaining pronouns will clearly refer to a single antecedent.

Guilt and unkindness can be emotionally destructive to you and your friends. You must get rid of them.

Here are two ways you could rewrite this sentence:

1) Guilt and unkindness can be emotionally destructive to you and your friends. You must get rid of *these issues.*

2) Guilt and unkindness can be emotionally destructive to you and your friends. You must get rid of *these destructive emotions*.

2. *A pronoun must be placed close to its antecedent*. If too many phrases come between a pronoun and its antecedent, the sentence can be difficult to read and understand. This can happen even if the intervening material is logically related to the rest of the sentence. Let us consider the following sentence:

After meeting a few guests, the President entered the reception. At that point, Senator Chin and the other elected officials began to pose for pictures. Even so, *he* did not join them.

In this sentence *he* is too far away from its antecedent, the President. One solution is to replace *he* with *the President.* The other solution is to rewrite the sentences to move the pronoun closer:

1) After meeting a few guests, the President entered the reception. At that point, Senator Chin and the other elected officials began to pose for pictures. Even so, the President did not join them.

2) After meeting a few guests, the President entered the reception. He did not join Senator Chin and the other elected officials, even though they began to pose for pictures.

When you start a new paragraph, repeat the noun from the previous paragraph rather than using a pronoun in its place. Repeating the noun (usually a name) can help your reader more easily follow your logic.

3. *A pronoun must clearly refer to a definite antecedent*. One should make sure all pronouns refer to only one antecedent. The pronouns *it, this, that,* and *which* are especially prone to unclear pronoun reference. Let us consider the following sentence:

I told my friends that I was going to be a rock star, which annoyed my mother.

The following form is better because it is less ambiguous:

My mother was annoyed because I told my friends that I was going to be a rock star.

- ***The Generic Masculine Pronoun***

The use of masculine third-person pronouns (*he/ him/ his/ himself*) as generic pronouns is no longer acceptable to many people in business communication. Whatever one's own intentions may be, some readers will regard this usage as insulting, insensitive, or at the very least, distracting.

By "*generic pronouns*" the pronouns that are used when the gender of the person referred to is unknown or undefined are meant, a common occurrence in technical writing. The problem is that most

people exclusively visualize a male "agent" when they encounter the masculine pronouns in print, even when they are clearly meant to be taken generically. In technical writing, the author usually wants the readers to visualize themselves as the agent.

Pronouns have number, person, and gender.

Definition	Example
Number shows amount. (singular or plural)	Lenny has changed *his* plans. Lenny and Sam have changed *their* plans.
Person indicates whether the pronoun refers to the first person (*I:* the person speaking), second person (*you:* the person spoken to), or third person (*she:* person, lace, or thing. spoken about).	*I* like to read mysteries. *You* can get them in the library.
Gender may be masculine, feminine, or neuter.	*He* is a butcher; *she* is a baker. *It* is a fine car.

Traditionally, a masculine pronoun was used to refer to a single antecedent whose gender is not specified:

A student should turn in *his* assignments on time.

This usage is no longer considered correct since it is sexist language. Both the masculine and feminine pronouns can be used or the sentence can be rewritten to make the pronoun plural: A student should turn in *his or her* assignments on time.

Students should turn in *their* assignments on time.

Which choice is best? Consider rewriting these sentences to make the pronoun plural because this results in smoother sentences.

Exercises

Exercise 1. In each sentence below, replace the italicized word(s) or word group(s) with an appropriate pronoun, being careful to use the correct form.

1. I sold my lorry to *Gus*.
2. I sold *my lorry* to Gus and Merdine.
3. I sold my lorry to *Gus and Merdine*.
4. *The lorry's* brakes were bad, and *the lorry's* tyres were bald.
5. *Merdine* gave the lorry to *Gus and Merdine's* daughter.
6. *Gus and Merdine's daughter* promised to pay *her parents* for *the lorry*.
7. *The daughter's* boyfriend drove the lorry into a duck pond.
8. The duck pond belongs to *me and my family*, and *my family and I* now have one very unhappy duck.
9. *The duck's* temper is almost as bad as *my temper*.
10. *Merdine and Gus* have offered to pay *me and my family* for the damages by selling me the lorry that still sits in our pond.

Exercise 2. Complete each of the following sentences with an appropriate personal or possessive pronoun.

1. Most of the voters placed _____ ballots in the wastebasket.
2. When children are left to themselves, _____ tend to emulate their parents' behaviour.
3. Each woman at today's workshop described _____ project in detail.
4. The umbrella originated 3,400 years ago in Mesopotamia; _____ offered protection not from the rain but from the sun.
5. Before closing your word processor, _____ should always remember to save your text.
6. When students attend a local college, _____ can live quietly and inexpensively at home.
7. Students living in the dormitories must vacate _____ rooms during spring break.
8. When a woman joins the RESET program, _____ is required to develop a personal plan.

9. Neither one of the men could make up _____ mind.

10. An oak tree is just a nut that held _____ ground.

11. Never hold a baby in your lap when _____ are driving a car.

12. Shakespeare left his second-best bed to _____ wife.

13. A century ago, the local chemist's was different from the ones we have today: _____ usually stood in the centre of town and served as a meeting place for people from all walks of life.

14. All students need to renew _____ identification cards before the first day of the new semester.

15. Neither one of the girls could remember _____ address.

Exercise 3. In the following pairs of sentences, one sentence is correct, and the other sentence contains a vague or ambiguous pronoun reference. Mark the CORRECT sentence.

1. A_____ When Pearl Buck was forty, her novel The Good Earth won the Pulitzer Prize.

B_____ When she was forty, Pearl Buck's novel The Good Earth won the Pulitzer Prize.

2. A_____ Buck received much critical praise and earned over $7 million, but she was very modest about it.

B_____ Buck received much critical praise and earned over $7 million, but she was very modest about her achievements.

3. A_____ Bill bought a Norwegian canoe because he had heard that they make the best canoes.

B_____ Bill bought a Norwegian canoe because he had heard that Norwegians make the best canoes.

4. A_____ Katie was an only child, and it was hard.

B_____ Katie was an only child, and her solitary life was hard.

5. A_____ Jennifer's sister wondered if she were tall enough to be a model.

B_____ Jennifer's sister wondered if Jennifer were tall enough to be a model.

6. A_____ Dipping the spoon into the pot of simmering soup, Jean felt the spoon slip out of her hand.

B_____ Dipping the spoon into the pot of simmering soup, Jean felt it slip out of her hand.

7. A_____ At a local restaurant, they provide each table with a bucket of peanuts.

B_____ At a local restaurant, the owner provides each table with a bucket of peanuts.

8. A_____ Mary and Tom left their bags at the ticket counter, but then they weren't sure if their bags were safe.

B_____ Mary and Tom left their bags at the ticket counter, but then they weren't sure if they were safe.

9. A_____ The boat bumped the edge of the dock, but the dock didn't need many repairs.

B_____ The boat bumped the edge of the dock, but it didn't need many repairs.

10. A_____ Although Mike was a real sports fan, his brother never became interested in them.

B_____ Although Mike was a real sports fan, his brother never became interested in sports.

Exercise 4-5. Find and correct any errors in pronoun reference and agreement in the following sentences. This may entail rewriting the sentence substantially. It might be helpful to identify the antecedent and pronoun first. In some cases, you may need to replace a pronoun with a noun or add an antecedent that the pronoun logically refers to.

1. When the boy gently picked up his puppy, his ears stood up and his tail started wagging.

2. My mother is a mail carrier, but they wouldn't hire me.

3. After Governor Baldridge watched the lion perform, he was taken to Main Street and fed 25 pounds of raw meat in front of the Fox Theatre.

4. After drying your dog with a towel, be sure to drop it into the washing machine.

5. I applied for a student loan, but they turned me down.

6. Because guilt and bitterness can be emotionally destructive to you and your children, you must get rid of them.

7. After removing the roast from the broiling pan, allow it to soak in soapy water.

8. Beer in one hand and bowling ball in the other, Merdine raised it to her lips and swallowed it in one mighty gulp.

9. In the college catalogue it says that students caught cheating will be suspended.

10. A few moments after the countess had broken the traditional bottle of champagne on the bows of the noble ship, she slid slowly and gracefully down the slipway, entering the water with scarcely a splash.

11. When Frank set the vase on the rickety end table, it broke.

12. A broken board had penetrated the driver's cabin and just missed his head; this had to be removed before the man could be rescued.

13. When a student is placed on probation, you may file an appeal with the dean.

Using Adjectives and Adverbs Correctly

- *Distinguishing between Adjectives and Adverbs*
- *Comparing with Adjectives and Adverbs*
- *Using Predicate Adjectives after Linking Verbs*
- *Double Negatives*
- *Placing Adverbs in a Sentence*
- *Ordinary Adjectives Versus Extreme Adjectives*
- *Inversions after Negative Adverbs*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Choose the correct word in brackets:

1. He (correct, correctly) defined the terms. The answer sounded (correctly, correct).

2. He measured the floor (exact, exactly). They proved to be (perfectly, perfect) (exact, exactly) measurements.

3. The stillness of the tomb was (awfully, awful). The tomb was (awfully, awful) still.

4. It was a (dangerously, dangerous) lake to swim in. The man was (dangerous, dangerously) drunk. The gas smelled (dangerously, dangerous).

5. Her voice sounds (beautifully, beautiful). She sang the song (exact, exactly) as it was written. We heard it (perfectly, perfect).

6. You must send payments (regular, regularly). We deal on a (strictly, strict) cash basis.

7. He did not pass the course as (easy, easily) as he thought he would.

8. I find this novel very (interesting, interestingly). It was (interesting, interestingly) written.

9. He is tired because he has worked (hard, hardly). He is a (hard, hardly) worker.

- ***Distinguishing between Adjectives and Adverbs***

Both adjectives and adverbs describe other words. *Adjectives* describe a noun or pronoun. They may come before the word they describe (That is a cute puppy.) or they may follow the word they describe (That puppy is cute.). *Adverbs* describe a verb, adjective, or other adverb. Adverbs are words that modify everything but nouns and pronouns. They modify adjectives, verbs, and other adverbs. A word is an adverb if it answers *how, when, or where*.

Many adverbs are formed by adding **-ly** to an adjective (**poor →poorly; gentle → gently**), but a number of common adverbs do not follow this pattern: *always, elsewhere, fast, hard, rather, so, straight, very, well.* On the other hand, there are a number of adjectives that end in –ly: *daily, early, elderly, friendly, likely, lovely, costly, yearly etc.*

Further, some words can be either adjectives or adverbs, depending on how they are used in a sentence.

Adjective: It was a *hard exam (*adj. noun).

Adverb: I *studied hard* all week(verb adv.).

Adjective: Herman took the *late plane* back to Washington (adj. noun).

Adverb: Many of the guests *stayed late,* so we turned off the lights and went to bed (verb adv.).

Therefore, the only reliable way to tell the difference between adjectives and adverbs is to analyse their function in a sentence. The following chart shows how to examine sentences to distinguish between adjectives and adverbs.

Modifier	Function	Example
Adjective	Describe nouns	I went to an *early class.* adj. noun
Adjective	Describe pronouns	*They* were *sick* with flu for days. pronoun adj.
Adverb	Describe verbs	Kate *awoke early* in the morning. verb adv.

Adverb	Describe adverbs	Kate awoke *very early* in the morning. adv. adv.
Adverb	Describe adjectives	The dawn was *really beautiful.* adv. adj.

Positive, Comparative, and Superlative Degrees of Comparison

Adjectives and adverbs not only describe things; they also compare them. Adjectives and adverbs have different forms to show degrees of comparison. There are three degrees of comparison: *positive, comparative,* and *superlative.* The following list summarizes the three degrees of comparison:

- *Positive:* The base form of the adjective or adverb *not* being used in a comparison.
- *Comparative:* The form of the adjective or adverb being used to compare *two* things.
- *Superlative:* The form of the adjective or adverb being used to compare *three or more* things.

Here's a chart to make things clearer:

Degree of Comparison	**Number of Things Compared**	**Example**
Positive degree	None	Donald is *rich.*
Comparative degree	Two	Ross is *richer* than Donald.
Superlative degree	Three or more	Bill is the *richest* of all.

The following guidelines show how to form the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives and adverbs.

1. In most cases, *-er/-est* is used with one- and two-syllable adjectives or adverbs.

2. When an adjective or adverb has three or more syllables, *more* and *most* or *less* and *least* are used to form the comparative and superlative degrees.

3. Two-syllable adjectives ending in *–er, -y, -ow, -le* and some others may form their degrees of comparison both analytically, with *more, most,* and synthetically, with *–er, -est: clever cleverer, the cleverest* or *more, most clever, pleasant – pleasanter, the pleasantest, more, most pleasant.*

4. If the word sounds awkward, one should break the rule. For example, since *just* has one syllable, the comparative form should be *juster* and the superlative form should be *justest.* However, since this sounds odd, we use *more just* and *most just.* Listening to the word will help to identify the most natural-sounding form of the comparative or superlative degree. When in doubt, the dictionary will be consulted.

5. Both *-er* and *more,* or *-est* and *most,* are never used with the same modifier. Double comparisons are to be avoided in English. For example, "the *most* furth*est*", "least happiest" are incorrect (*furthest*, *least happy* are the only possible correct form).

6. All adverbs that end in *-ly* form their comparative and superlative degrees with *more* and *most.*

Correct:

She spoke *quickly*. She spoke *more quickly* than he did

6. Some adjectives and adverbs have irregular forms. A few adjectives and adverbs don't follow these rules when they form the comparative and superlative degrees. Unfortunately, they are among the most commonly used modifiers in English, so one may need them virtually every day. Since they don't follow a pattern, they should be memorized.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
bad	worse	worst
badly	worse	worst
far	farther	farthest
far	further	furthest
good	better	best
ill	worse	worst
little (amount)	less	least
many	more	most
much	more	most
well	better	best

Both forms, *farther, farthest* and *further, furthest* are used for distances. Only *further, furthest* are used with the meaning *additional, next: For further information, consult our webpage. Further, we will speak about the message of the story.*

Good and *well* are especially tricky. These guidelines will help to avoid mistakes:

- *Good* is always an adjective: You should read this novel: It has a *good plot (*adj. noun); Rory traded in her old car for a *good one (*adj. noun).
- *Well* is an adjective used to describe good health: You *look well* in that gorilla suit (verb adj.); You *sound well*—for someone who has laryngitis (verb adj.).
- *Good* is used with *feel* when you are not referring to health: I *feel good* about my decision to learn Spanish
- *Well* is an adverb when used to describe anything but health: Chef Big Hat *cooks well (*verb adv.); As a result, everyone in his house no doubt *eats well! (*verb adv.).

When referring to health, use *well* rather than *good*: I do not feel well. You do not look well today.

- ***Comparing with Adjectives and Adverbs***

These guidelines will help to make the comparisons correct.

1. The comparative degree (*-er* or *more* form) is used to compare two things: Your house is *bigger* than mine; Your house has *more* rooms than mine.

2. The superlative form (*-est* or *most)* is used to compare three or more things: The kitchen is the *largest* room in the house; It is the *most* impressive room of all.

Fewer and **less** have different meanings and cannot be used interchangeably. **Fewer** refers to items that **can** be counted (**fewer sandwiches, fewer cookies**). **Less** refers to amounts that **can't** be counted (**less sugar, less sand, less anger, less filling**).

3. When compare one item in a group is compared with the rest of the group, the words *other* or *else* will be included. Then the comparison will make sense.

Confusing comparison: Abraham Lincoln was greater than any American president.

Logical comparison: Abraham Lincoln was greater than any *other* American president.

Confusing comparison: The oak tree in our front yard is taller than any in the neighbourhood.

Logical comparison: The oak tree in our front yard is taller than any *other* in the neighbourhood.

Confusing comparison: England scored more points than any team.

Logical comparison: England scored more points than any other team.

4. Comparisons should be complete. Sentences that finish a comparison make sense. Comparisons that are incomplete or that compare illogical items become muddled. This confuses readers and obscures the writer's point.

Confusing comparison: Jack spends more time playing video games than homework.

Logical comparison: Jack spends more time playing video games than *doing* homework.

Confusing comparison: My suit is more stylish than Nick.

Logical comparison: My suit is more stylish than *Nick's suit.*

- ***Using Predicate Adjectives after Linking Verbs***

A *predicate adjective* is an adjective that follows a linking verb and describes the subject of a sentence. *Linking verbs* describe a state of being or a condition. They include all forms of *to be* (such as *am, is, are, were, was*) and verbs related to the senses (*look, smell, sound, feel*). Linking verbs connect the subject of a sentence to a word that renames or describes it. Here is a list of linking verbs:

- to appear
- to be
- to become
- to feel
- to grow
- to look
- to prove
- to remain
- to seem
- to smell

- to sound
- to stay
- to taste
- to turn

Incorrect: This *goulash tastes deliciously (*noun + link. verb + adv.).

Correct: This *goulash tastes delicious (*noun + link. verb + adj.).

An adjective rather than an adverb is used after a linking verb. Therefore, *delicious* rather than *deliciously* after the linking verb *tastes* is the correct form.

Incorrect: The *child felt badly (*noun + link. verb + adv.).

Correct: The *child felt bad (*noun + link. verb + adj.).

An adjective rather than an adverb is used after a linking verb. Therefore, *bad* rather than *badly* will be used after the linking verb *felt.*

Incorrect: *I look awfully* in that shade of orange *(*pronoun + link. verb + adv.).

Correct: *I look awful* in that shade of orange *(*pronoun + link. verb + adj.).

An adjective rather than an adverb is used after a linking verb. Therefore, *awful* rather than *awfully* is used after the linking verb *look.*

Some verbs do double duty: sometimes they function as linking verbs, but other times they function as action verbs. As linking verbs, these verbs use adjectives as complements. As action verbs, these verbs use adverbs as complements.

State of being verbs can be used as linking verbs or action verbs. We need to be able to determine the *function* of the verb to tell the difference. The following sentences contain verbs that are used as either linking or action verbs.

Linking: The monkey **looked** hungry.

Action: The monkey **looked** angrily.

Linking: The soup **tasted** good.

Action: I **tasted** the soup.

Linking: He **grew** tired of walking.

Action: The plant **grew** rapidly.

Linking: Mother **appeared** happy at her party.

Action: Mother **appeared** quietly in the room.

- ***Double Negatives***

The following words are negatives: *never, no, nobody, none, not, nothing, nowhere, hardly, barely scarcely.*

Using two negative words in the same clause (group of words) creates a *double negative.* A *double negative* is an incorrect usage and should be avoided. To avoid this grammatical error, only one negative word will be used to express a negative idea.

Double negative: The traveller did *not* have *no* energy after the long flight.

Correct: The traveller did *not* have *any* energy after the long flight. or The traveller had *no* energy left after the long flight.

Double negative: Shania could *not hardly* see in the blizzard.

Correct: Shania could *hardly* see in the blizzard. or Shania could *barely* see in the blizzard.

Double negatives are especially likely to cause problems when contractions are used. When the word *not* is used in a contraction—such as *isn't, doesn't, wouldn't, couldn't, don't*— the negative tends to slip by. As a result, writers and speakers may add another negative.

Double negative: Billy *didn't* bring *nothing* with him on vacation.

Correct: Billy *didn't* bring *anything* with him on vacation. or Billy brought *hardly* anything with him on vacation.

However, to create understatement, a word with a negative prefix and another negative word can be used. The two most common negative prefixes are *un-* and *-in.*

e.g. Nowadays, it is *not un*common to take six years to complete a four-year college degree.

The report is *not in*accurate, but no one should stake their reputation on it.

- ***Placing Adverbs in a Sentence***

Adverbs of Manner: Adverbs of manner are placed after the verb or entire expression (at the end of the sentence).

For example: *He walks quickly*.

Adverbs of Time: Adverbs of time are placed after the verb or entire expression (at the end of the sentence).

For example: *She visited Paris last year.*

Adverbs of Frequency: Adverbs of frequency are placed before the main verb (not the auxiliary verb).

For example: He *often goes to the cinema. Do you sometimes get up early*?

Adverbs of Degree: Adverbs of degree tell us about the intensity or degree of an action, an adjective or another adverb. Common adverbs of degree: *almost, nearly, quite, just, too, enough, hardly, scarcely, completely, very, extremely.*

Adverbs of degree are usually placed:

➢ before the adjective or adverb they are modifying:

e.g. *The water was extremely cold*.

➢ before the main verb:

e.g. *He was just leaving. She has almost finished*.

Enough as an adverb meaning 'to the necessary degree' goes after adjectives and adverbs.

E.g. *Is your coffee hot enough? (adjective)*

He didn't work hard enough. (adverb)

It also goes before nouns, and means 'as much as is necessary'. In this case it is not an adverb, but a 'determiner'.

E.g. *We have enough bread*.

Very goes before an adverb or adjective to make it stronger.

E.g. The girl was very beautiful. (adjective)

He worked very quickly. (adverb)

The following common adverbs are used like *very* and are listed in order of strength, from positive to negative: *extremely, especially, particularly, pretty, rather, quite, fairly, rather, not especially, not particularly.*

Rather can be positive or negative, depending on the adjective or adverb that follows:

Positive: *The teacher was rather nice*.

Negative: *The film was rather disappointing*.

Adverbs of Comment: Adverbs of comment are placed at the beginning of a sentence.

E.g.: *Luckily, I was able to come to the presentation*.

Important Exceptions to Adverb Placement

Some adverbs are placed at the beginning of a sentence to provide more emphasis.

E.g. *Now you tell me you can't come!*

Adverbs of frequency are placed after the verb 'to be' when used as the main verb of the sentence.

E.g. *Jack is often late for work.*

Some adverbs of frequency (*sometimes, usually, normally*) are also placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis.

E.g.: *Sometimes I visit my friends in London*.

- ***Ordinary Adjectives versus Extreme Adjectives***

Ordinary adjectives are normal adjectives that do not have the idea of 'very'. *Extreme adjectives*, however, are strong adjectives that have the idea of 'very'. The extreme adjectives do not form degrees of comparison.

Ordinary Adjectives	Extreme Adjectives
beautiful	gorgeous
ugly	awful
dirty	filthy
good	superb, great, fantastic
bad	terrible
happy	thrilled
angry	furious
hungry	starving
tired	exhausted
funny	hilarious
big	huge, enormous
small	tiny
fat	obese
scared	terrified
cold	freezing
hot	boiling
clean	spotless

Very, absolutely and *really* are used differently according whether the adjective is an ordinary or a strong one. *Very* is used only with ordinary adjectives, *absolutely* is used only with extreme adjectives, *really* is used with both ordinary and extreme adjectives.

- ***Inversions after Negative Adverbials***

There are some words and phrases that function as adverbials that sometimes need an inversion - the negative adverbial is placed first, an auxiliary verb follows it and the subject of the sentence comes next. Look at these two sentences.

Bob rarely speaks to himself.

Rarely does Bob speak to himself.

The adverb here is "rarely". If it comes after the subject, there is no inversion (as in the first sentence), but if it comes before the subject, we need an inversion.

The sentence with the inversion sounds more formal or more literary, and sentences like this are less common in ordinary conversation. The inversion of the subject and the verb can take place after the adverbs *never (before), rarely, seldom, little, barely/hardly/ scarcely...when, no sooner....than, only when, only after, under/in no circumstances, in no way, not only.... but also, not until.*

E.g.: *Seldom does Bob get invited to parties. (seldom = rarely)*

Little did she realize that her grandmother was really a wolf.

Barely/hardly/scarcely...when/before; No sooner....than are used to describe an event that happened immediately after another.

E.g.: *Hardly had he stepped outside when it started to rain.*

Scarcely had he stepped outside when it started to rain.

No sooner had he stepped outside than it started to rain.

The past perfect tense is used to describe the event that happened first.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Select the word that best completes each sentence.

1. The elevator in my sister's apartment moves so (slowly, slow) we can make whoopee, conceive a child, and give birth before reaching her floor. And her apartment is on the first floor.

2. China has (most, more) English speakers than the United States.

3. The (longer, longest) town name in the world has 167 letters.

4. I've learned that you shouldn't compare yourself to the (better, best); others can do.

5. I've learned that two people can look at the exact same thing and see something (total, totally) different.

6. Every day (most, more) money is printed for Monopoly than for the U.S. Treasury.

7. My friend Fred is not the (brightest, brighter) light on the Ferris wheel.

8. If everything seems to be going (good, well), you have obviously overlooked something.

9. The grass is always (more greener, greener) when you leave the sprinkler on.

10. The (longer, longest) recorded flight of a chicken is 13 seconds.

11. The average person is about a quarter of an inch (tall, taller, tallest) in the morning.

12. The Neanderthal's brain was (big, bigger, biggest) than yours is.

13. Your right lung takes in (more, most) air than your left lung does.

14. Women's hearts beat (fast, faster, fastest) than men's hearts.

15. There are (more, most) plastic flamingos in America than real ones.

16. Each day is 0.00000002 seconds (long, longer, longest) than the one before because the Earth is gradually slowing down.

17. The total weight of all insects on Earth is 12 times (more great, greater, greatest, most greatest) than the weight of all the people on Earth.

18. There are more than three million lakes in Alaska. The (large, larger, largest), Lake Iliamna, is the size of Connecticut.

19. When North America was first settled, beavers there grew (bigger, biggest) than bears.

20. The (bright, brighter, brightest) star in the sky, Sirius, gives out 26 times as much light as the Sun.

21. The (older, oldest) national flag still in existence, that of Denmark, dates back to the thirteenth century.

22. The ashes of the metal magnesium are (more heavier, heavier) than magnesium itself.

23. Murphy's Oil Soap is the chemical (more, most) commonly used to clean elephants.

24. If things get any (worse, worst), I'll have to ask you to stop helping me.

25. How much (deep, deeper, deepest) would the ocean be if sponges didn't grow in it?

Exercise 2. Choose the best answer to each question.

1. *Adjectives* are modifiers that describe a

(a) Noun or verb

(b) Pronoun or adverb

(c) Noun or pronoun

(d) Verb or preposition

2. *Adverbs* are modifiers that describe all the following words except

(a) Verbs

(b) Pronouns

(c) Adjectives

(d) Adverbs

3. Each of the following is a degree of comparison *except*

(a) Positive

(b) Comparative

(c) Superlative

(d) Negative

4. What is the comparative form of *popular?*

(a) Popularest
(b) Popular
(c) Most popular
(d) More popular
5. The comparative and superlatives forms of *ill* are
(a) Worse, most worse
(b) Worster, worstest
(c) worse, worst
(d) More ill, most ill
6. The comparative and superlatives forms of *many* and *much* are
(a) Double comparisons
(b) Many, more
(c) Regular
(d) Identical
7. All the following are negative words *except*
(a) Scarcely
(b) Hardly
(c) Did
(d) n't
8. Which is the best revision of the following sentence?
Which of the twins writes the best?
(a) Which of the twins writes best?
(b) Which of the twins writes better?
(c) Which of the twins writes good?
(d) Which of the twins writes more better?
9. Which of the following words best completes the sentence?
Mr. Big is willing to cooperate than his attitude suggests.
(a) Less
(b) Least
(c) Leastest
(d) Lesser
10. Which is the best revision of the following sentence?
Two can live most cheaply than one.
(a) Two can live cheaply than one.

(b) Two can live cheaplier than one.

(c) Two can live more cheaply than one.

(d) Two can live most cheaply than one.

11. When you are comparing a member of a group with the rest of the group, make sure

that your sentence contains the words

(a) Than or if

(b) Good or worse

(c) More or better

(d) Other or else

12. Which of the following sentences is *not* correct?

(a) Nico could not see in the gloomy night.

(b) Nico could not hardly see in the gloomy night.

(c) Nico could barely see in the gloomy night.

(d) Nico had difficult seeing clearly in the gloomy night.

Exercise 3. Choose the correct word:

1. He (correct, correctly) defined the terms. The answer sounded (correctly, correct).

2. She (quickly, quick) adjusted the fees. She adapted (quick, quickly) to any situation.

3. He measured the floor (exact, exactly). They proved to be (perfectly, perfect) (exact, exactly) measurements.

4. The stillness of the tomb was (awfully, awful). The tomb was (awfully, awful) still.

5. It was a (dangerously, dangerous) lake to swim in. The man was (dangerous, dangerously) drunk. The gas smelled (dangerously, dangerous).

6. She performed (magnificent, magnificently). It was a (magnificent, magnificently) beautiful performance.

7. Her voice sounds (beautifully, beautiful). She sang the song (exact, exactly) as it was written. We heard it (perfectly, perfect).

8. He was a very (sensibly, sensible) person. He acted very (sensible, sensibly).

9. Mike wrote too (slow, slowly) on the exam. He always writes (slow, slowly).

10. Talk (softly, soft) or don't talk at all. The music played (softly, soft).

11. Andrea knows the material very (good, well). She always treats us (good, well).

12. You must send payments (regular, regularly).

13. The mechanic's tools were (well, good). The foreman said that his work was (good, well) done.

14. She worked (careful, carefully) with the sick child. She was a very (careful, carefully) worker.

15. He did not pass the course as (easy, easily) as he thought he would.

Exercise 4. Fill in the correct form of the adjective or adverb in brackets.

A. Once upon a time there were three little pigs who wanted to see the world. When they left home, their mum gave them some advice: Whatever you do, do it _____(good) you can. So the three pigs wandered through the world and were _____ (happy) pigs you've ever seen. They were playing _____ (funny) games all summer long, but then came autumn and each pig wanted to build a house. The first pig was not only _____ (small) but also _____(lazy) of the pigs. He _____ (quick) built a house out of straw. The second pig made his house out of wood which was a bit _____ (difficult) than building a straw house. The third pig followed his mum's advice and built a strong house out of bricks, which was _____ (difficult) house to build. The pig worked very _____(hard), but finally got his house ready before winter. During the cold winter months, the three little pigs lived _____ (extreme) _____ (good) in their houses. They _____ (regular) visited one another and had _____ (wonderful) time of their lives.

B. One night, however, a wolf came to the place where the three little pigs lived. It was _____ (horrible) wolf in the whole wide world. Being _____ (terrible) hungry, he went straight to the straw house. "Let me in, little pig," the wolf

shouted out (angry) , “or I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house down!” The pig didn’t let him in, but as the house was made out of straw, the wolf blew it down _____ (easy) . The little pig ran to his brother’s house as _____ (fast) as he could. But the wolf followed him to the wooden house. “Open up, little pigs,” he shouted even _____ (angry) . Then he huffed and puffed and it didn’t take him much _____ (long) to blow the house down. The two pigs _____ (nervous) ran to their brother who lived in the brick house. The wolf followed them _____ (grim) . “Open the door,” he shouted_____ (furious) . As the pigs didn’t open, the wolf huffed and puffed _____ (heavy) . But the stone house didn’t fall down. From all the huffing and puffing the wolf became even_____ (hungry) . With his last power he _____ (slow) climbed up the house to get in through the chimney. The pigs saw this and _____ (hasty) lit a fire.

When the wolf climbed down the chimney, he fell into the fire which was _____ (awful) hot. He burnt his bum _____ (bad) and ran away. From that day on, the pigs had no more trouble with the wolf and they lived _____ (happy) ever after.

Exercise 5. For each of the following sentences, add the negative expression shown in brackets at the beginning of the sentence, and make any other changes that are necessary.

1. We had entered the room when the telephone rang. (scarcely)
2. I have seen a more beautiful ballet than that one. (never)
3. We realized that a dangerous stretch of road lay ahead of us. (little)
4. I have worked as hard as I could. (never before)
5. A writer can express his exact feelings in words. (rarely)
6. We perceive everything that is around us. (hardly ever)
7. One can find a more striking example of erosion than the Grand Canyon. (nowhere)
8. They guessed what was about to happen. (little)

9. I am entirely satisfied with my situation. (seldom)
10. One comprehends a complex situation immediately. (rarely)

Exercise 6. The following sentences are incorrect because each contains a double negative. Each sentence can be corrected by omitting or altering one of the negative expressions. Write two corrected versions for each sentence. For example:

E.g.: *We have not got no sugar. We have got no sugar.* or *We have not got any sugar.*

1. He does not need no advice.
2. We never go nowhere interesting.
3. I did not get none of the answers right.
4. She does not know nothing.
5. We had not met neither of the boys before.
6. They did not do no harm.
7. He never speaks to nobody.
8. You do not have no reason to behave like that.
9. I do not know nothing about it.
10. I do not have no time for such things.

Exercise 7. Formulate the main rules for using adjectives and adverbs correctly in English.

Exercise 8. Compare the rules for using adjectives and adverbs correctly in English and in your mother tongue.

Using Verbs Correctly

- *The Verb Tenses*
- *Verb Structures and Patterns*
- *Verbs Easily Confused*
- *Active and Passive Voice*
- *Using Verb Moods*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Choose the answer that correctly completes the following sentence*: Frightened residents _____ the village as the steaming river of lava flowed steadily closer.*

(A) flee
B) are fleeing
C) fled

2. Choose the answer that correctly completes the following sentence*: The beekeeper has been _____ by bees so many times that her body is now immune to the venom, but she still feels the pain.*

(A) sting
B) stinged
(C) stung

3. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the verb tense of the capitalized words*: Credit bureaus WILL ERASE inaccurate information from a credit report, but getting this done is often difficult and frustrating.*

(A) Present
(B) Past
(C) Future

4. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the verb tense of the capitalized words*: By next month, our club WILL HAVE INITIATED*

13 new members, and six nominees are still waiting to be accepted.

(A) future

(B) past

(C) future perfect

5. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the verb tense of the capitalized words*: Captain Ahab HAD BEEN SEARCHING the ocean expanses for a long time before he finally sighted the white whale, Moby Dick.*

(A) Future perfect continuous

(B) Past perfect continuous

(C) Present continuous

6. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the verb tense of the capitalized words*: A U. S. swimmer DID WIN six gold medals in the 1972 Olympics.*

(A) present emphatic

(B) past emphatic

(C) present continuous

7. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the voice of the capitalized words: *Due to their mystery, their elusiveness, and their nocturnal nature, owls HAVE always FASCINATED people.*

(A) active voice

(B) passive voice

8. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the mood of the capitalized word*: The undercover police officer asked that her face not BE shown if she agreed to an interview with the television reporter.*

(A) Indicative mood

(B) Imperative mood

(C) Subjunctive mood

9. Choose the answer that correctly identifies the mood of the capitalized word*: ASK the oboist to play that note again so you can tune your violin before we start to play the first selection.*

(A) Indicative mood

(B) Imperative mood

(C) Subjunctive mood

10. Choose the answer that correctly completes the following sentence*: Pushed over by snowploughs, the mailboxes all along that country road _____ on snow banks all winter.*

(A) lay

(B) layed

(C) laid

Verbs are words that name an action or describe a state of being.

There are four basic types of verbs: *action verbs, linking verbs, auxiliary verbs,* and *verb phrases.* Verbs also convey information through changes in their form. Here are the five things that can be found out from a verb:

✓ *Tense* (when the action takes place: past, present, or future)

✓ *Person* (who or what experiences the action)

✓ *Number* (how many subjects act or receive the action)

✓ *Mood* (the attitude expressed toward the action)

✓ *Voice* (whether the subject acts or is acted upon: the active or passive voice)

- ***The Verb Tenses***

Learning verb tenses is one of the most important tasks in any language learning. The *tense* of a verb shows its time. Each English tense has a perfect form, indicating completed action, a progressive form, indicating an on-going action, and a perfect progressive form, indicating an on-going action that has been in progress for some time. Not all the English tenses can be translated exactly in other languages. The present participle forms all six of the progressive forms. The past participle forms the last three tenses. Here is a chart of the English tenses, provided with examples and signal words typical of each tense:

	Affirmative/ Negative/ Question	Use	Signal Words
Simple Present	A: He reads. N: He does not read. Q: Does he read?	✓ action in the present taking place once, never or several times, with certain regularity ✓ general/habitual activities ✓ facts – universal truth ✓ actions taking place one after another ✓ future action set by a timetable or schedule ✓ if sentences type I (If I talk, …)	always, every …, never, normally, often, seldom, sometimes, usually, at the weekend
Present Continuous	A: He is reading. N: He is not reading. Q: Is he reading?	✓ action taking place at the moment of speaking ✓ action taking place only for a temporary period ✓ action personally arranged for the future ✓ changing situations ✓ smb's irritating habit	at the moment, just, just now, Listen!, Look!, now, right now, today, this week, these days, tonight, tomorrow
Simple Past	A: He read. N: He did not read. Q: Did he read?	✓ action in the past taking place once, never or several times ✓ actions taking place one after another in the past ✓ action taking place in the middle of another action ✓ if sentence type II (If I talked, …)	yesterday, 2 minutes ago, in 1990, the other day, last Friday, when I was a child

Past Continuous	A: He was reading. N: He was not reading. Q: Was he reading?	✓ action going on at a certain time in the past ✓ long actions taking place at the same time ✓ long action in the past that is interrupted by another action	at … o'clock yesterday, when, while, as long as
Present Perfect Simple	A: He has read. N: He has not read. Q: Has he read?	✓ putting emphasis on the result of a past action that could have taken place at any moment in the past ✓ action that is still going on (non-action verbs) ✓ action that has stopped recently ✓ finished action that has an influence on the present ✓ action that has taken place once, never or several times before the moment of speaking ✓ announcing news ✓ describing changes ✓ describing smb's experience	already, ever, just, never, not yet, so far, till now, up to now, since, for, today, these days, this week, lately, recently, it's the first, second … time, to be - superlative
Present Perfect Continuous	A: He has been reading. N: He has not been reading. Q: Has he been reading?	✓ putting emphasis on the course or duration (not the result) ✓ action that has recently stopped or is still going on and there is evidence about it ✓ finished action that influenced the present	all day, for 4 years, since 1993, how long?, the whole week

Past Perfect Simple	A: He had read. N: He had not read. Q: Had he read?	✓ action taking place before a certain time in the past ✓ sometimes interchangeable with past perfect progressive ✓ putting emphasis only on the fact (not the duration) ✓ if sentence type III (If I had talked, …)	already, just, never, not yet, once, until that day
Past Perfect Continuous	A: He had been reading. N: He had not been reading. Q: Had he been reading?	✓ action taking place before a certain time in the past ✓ sometimes interchangeable with past perfect simple ✓ putting emphasis on the duration or course of an action	for, since, the whole day, all day
Future Simple	A: He will read. N: He will not read. Q: Will he read?	✓ action in the future that cannot be influenced ✓ spontaneous decision ✓ assumption with regard to the future ✓ assumption: *I think, probably, perhaps*	in a year, next …, tomorrow
Future Continuous	A: He will be reading. N: He will not be reading. Q: Will he be reading?	✓ action that will be in progress at a certain time in the future ✓ action that is sure to happen in the near future ✓ predicting future trends and tendencies	in one year, next week, tomorrow at this time, at …o'clock

Future Perfect	A: He will have read. N: He will not have read. Q: Will he have read?	✓ action that will be finished by a certain time in the future	by Monday, in a week, by …o'clock
Future Perfect Continuous	A: He will have been reading. N: He will not have been reading. Q: Will he have been reading?	✓ action taking place before a certain time in the future ✓ putting emphasis on the course of an action	for …, the last couple of hours, all day long
Conditional I	A: He would read. N: He would not read. Q: Would he read?	✓ action that might take place ✓ if sentences type II (If I were you, I would go home.)	
Conditional II	A: He would have read. N: He would not have read. Q: Would he have read?	✓ action that might have taken place in the past ✓ if sentences type III (If I had seen that, I would have helped.)	

There are a number of verbs that are never used in a continuous tense. These are the non-continuous or non-action verbs. Among them are the verbs related to the senses, the verbs related to thinking, the verbs related to possession, the verbs related to emotional states, the verbs related to appearance, and others. They include the following verbs: *appear, believe, belong to, contain, depend on, doubt, dislike,*

guess, hate, have (meaning possess), hear, imagine, involve, know, like, love, mean, mind, own, prefer, realise, regard, remember, seem, smell, sound, suppose, taste, understand, want.

- ***Verb Structures and Patterns***

The English verbs can be intransitive, transitive and linking.

➢ *Intransitive* - an intransitive verb does not take a direct object.

E.g. They're sleeping. They arrived late**.**

➢ *Transitive* – a transitive verb takes a direct object. The direct object can be a noun, a pronoun or a clause.

E.g. They bought the sweater. He watched them.

➢ *Linking* - **a** linking verb is followed by a noun or adjective which refers to the subject of the verb.

E.g. The meal looked wonderful. He felt embarrassed**.**

There are also many verb patterns which are common in English. When two verbs are used, it is especially important to be careful with the form the second verb takes (infinitive - to do, base form – do, gerund - doing). Here are the most common verb patterns characteristic of English:

1. Verb + infinitive. This is one of the most common verb combination forms. The following verbs are usually followed by a to-infinitive: *afford, agree, aim, appear, arrange, attempt, beg, care, choose, claim, dare, decide, demand, deserve, expect, fail, happen, help, hesitate, hope, learn, long, manage, mean, need, neglect, offer, plan, prepare, pretend, proceed, promise, refuse, resolve, seem, stop, swear, tend, threaten, use, volunteer, vow, want, wish, would, hate, would like, would love, would prefer.*

E.g. *He couldn't afford to have a holiday abroad.*

2. Verb +Object + to-Infinitive: advise, allow, choose, command, direct, encourage, expect, forbid, force, have, hire, instruct, invite, lead, leave, would like, would love, motivate, order, permit, persuade, prepare, promise, remind, send, teach, tell, urge, want, warn, ask, beg, challenge.

E.g. Parents want us to succeed.

3. Verb +Object + bare infinitive: make, let, had better, would rather.

Help can be followed by both to-infinitive and bare infinitive with no change in meaning.

E.g. *She made her children take vitamins.*

He helped his sister (to) move in.

4. Verb + gerund. The following verbs are usually followed by a gerund: *admit, advise, appreciate, avoid, can't help, complete, consider, delay, deny, detest, dislike, enjoy, entail, escape, excuse, finish, forbid, forgive, get through, give up, imagine, involve, keep, mind, mention, miss, permit, postpone, practise, prevent, quit, recall, report, resent, resist, resume, risk, spend (time, money), suggest, tolerate, waste (time, money), discuss, be busy, be worth, can't help, put off, report.*

E.g. The children can't help laughing when their father tickles them.

5. Verbs + Preposition + Gerund: admit to, approve of, argue about, apologise for, , arrest for, be/ get used to, believe in, care about, complain about, concentrate on, confess to, congratulate on, depend on, disapprove of, discourage from, dream about, feel like, forget about, insist on, object to, plan on, prevent (someone) from, refrain from, succeed in, talk about, think about, worry about, warn about/ against, insist on.

E.g. *They congratulated us on getting married.*

6. Verb + infinitive OR a gerund with (no difference in meaning): *begin, started continue.*

E.g. *He continued talking/ ta talk during the break.*

7. Verb + an object + infinitive OR verb + gerund (no difference in meaning): *advise, allow, encourage, recommend, permit, urge.*

E.g. *I advised seeing a doctor.*

I advised them to see a doctor.

He encourages eating healthy foods.

He encourages his patients to eat healthy foods.

8. Verbs + Gerunds OR *Infinitives* (different meaning*)*

➢ *dread* - usually "dread" is followed by a gerund. "Dread" is sometimes used with infinitives such as "think" or "consider" expressing the idea of not wanting to think or consider.

E.g. She dreaded taking the test.

He dreaded to think of the consequences of his actions.

➢ *forget* - When "forget" is used with a gerund, it means "to forget that you have done something."

When "forget" is used with an infinitive, it means "to forget that you need to do something."

E.g. She forgot reading the book when she was a kid.

She forgot to pay the rent this month.

➢ *need* - When "need" is used with a gerund, it takes on a passive meaning. It expresses the idea of improvement, repair, cleaning, taking care etc. "Need" is usually used with an infinitive or an object + an infinitive.

E.g. The house needs cleaning.

He needs to call his boss.

➢ *regret* - "Regret" is normally used with a gerund.
"Regret" is sometimes used with infinitives such as "to inform, to tell."

E.g. I regretted being late to the interview.

We regret to inform you that your position at the company is being eliminated.

➢ *remember* - When "remember" is used with a gerund, it means "to remember that you have done something." When "remember" is used with an infinitive, it means "to remember that you need to do something."

E.g. I remember mentioning the meeting yesterday.

He remembered to turn off the lights before he left.

➢ *stop* - "Stop" is normally used with a gerund. When "stop" is used with an infinitive, the infinitive takes on the meaning of "in order to."

E.g. He stopped smoking for health reasons.

He stopped to rest for a few minutes.

➢ *try* – "Try" followed by a gerund means to try or to experiment with different methods to see if something works. "Try to do" something means to make effort to do something, to try one's best, but with no success.

E.g.: She can't find a job. She tried looking in the paper, but there was nothing.

She tried to climb the tree, but she couldn't even get off the ground.

- ***Verbs Easily Confused***

➢ Fall / fell / fallen - Feel / felt / felt - Fill / filled / filled

Fall - move from a higher to a lower level, typically rapidly and without control E.g.: *Bombs could be seen falling from the planes*

Feel - be aware of (a person or object) through touching or being touched E.g.: *She felt someone touch her shoulder.*

Fill - cause (a space or container) to become full or almost full E.g.: *I filled up the bottle with water.*

➢ Find / found / found - Found / founded / founded

Find = get back something lost. E.g.: *I have found my keys.*

Found = start up an organization or institution E.g.: *Who founded the Red Cross?*

➢ *Flow* - move (of a liquid) E.g.: *Liquids flow*.

Fly - move in the air E.g.: *Birds fly in the sky.*

➢ Lay / laid / laid - Lie / lay / lain - Lie / lied / lied

Lay - put down flat. E.g.: *She laid the books on the table*. *Lay the papers down*.

Lie - to put your body flat on something, or to be in this position E.g. *My dog would lie in the shadow all day long. When people are exhausted, they should lie down for a rest.*

Lie - say things that are not true. E.g. *Children should be taught not to lie.*

➢ Raise / raised / raised - Rise / rose / risen

Raise – lift, or move to a higher position or level. E.g. *She raised her hand*.

Rise - move from a lower position to a higher one; come or go up E.g. *He rose from his seat*.

➢ Sit / sat/ sat - Set / set/ set

Sit - to be in a position with the weight of your body on your bottom and the top part of your body up, for example, on a chair E.g.: *Emma was sitting on a stool*.

Set - to arrange a time when something will happen, to make a piece of equipment ready to be used E.g. :*He set the alarm for 7 a.m*.

➢ Strike / struck / struck - Stroke / stroked / stroked

Strike - hit forcibly and deliberately with one's hand or a weapon or other implement E.g.: *Strike the iron while it is hot*.

Stroke - pass the hand gently over, move one's hand with gentle pressure over (a surface), typically repeatedly; caress E.g.: *She stroked the dog as he was licking its wound.*

➢ Wind / wound / wound - Wound / wounded / wounded

Wind - turn, tighten a spring; move in or take a twisting or spiral course: etc. E.g.: *She wound the rope around the tree*. *The path wound among olive trees.*

Wound - injure in a battle. E.g. *He was wounded in the battle.*

➢ Arise/ arose/ arisen – arouse/ aroused/ aroused

Arise - (of a problem, opportunity, or situation) emerge; become apparent; come into being; originate. E.g.: *New difficulties have arisen. The practice arose in the nineteenth century*

Arouse - to cause someone to have a particular feeling E.g.: *It's a subject that has aroused a lot of interest. Our suspicions were first aroused when we heard a muffled scream*.

- ***Active and Passive Voice***

In addition to showing time through tense, action verbs also show whether the subject performs the action or receives the action. This is called a verb's *voice.* English verbs have two voices: *active* and *passive.* (Linking verbs do not show voice.)

1. A verb is active when the subject performs the action.

E.g. *We took the package home*. ("We" are doing the action.)

I served a delicious meal. ("I" am doing the serving.)

In the active voice, the sentence starts with the subject. The first sentence starts with *We.* The second sentence starts with *I.*

2. A verb is passive when its action is performed upon the subject.

E.g. *A package was taken home*. (The reader is not indicated.)

A delicious meal was served by me.

In the passive voice, the sentence also starts with the subject, but it is not the doer of the action. In general, the active voice should be used whenever possible because it is more direct and forceful. Using the active voice makes one's writing crisp and powerful. The active verb is one word rather than two. Further, there is no need for a prepositional phrase beginning with "by" if the active voice is used.

Using the passive voice is preferable over the active voice under two conditions:

1. The speaker does not want to assign blame.

E.g. *A mistake was made with the filing system*.

The passive voice is very often found in business writing and speech. This helps the writer or reader avoid "finger pointing."

2. The doer of the action is not known.

E.g. *A prank phone call was made at 2:00 A.M.*

- ***Using Verb Moods***

In a sentence, the grammatical mood conveys the speaker's attitude about the state of being of what the sentence describes. There are three major moods in English: (1) the indicative mood is used to make factual statements or pose questions, (2) the imperative mood to express a request or command, (3) the conditional mood to express a proposition whose validity is dependent on some condition and (4) the (rarely used) subjunctive mood to show a wish, doubt, or anything else contrary to fact.

1. The Indicative Mood regards the action as actually occurring in reality, as a matter of fact. The indicative mood is the most common and is used to express facts and opinions or to make inquiries. All the tenses mentioned above are in the indicative mood, which is the most prevalent in English.

E.g. Coal mining is a major industry of Appalachia.

We still need someone to buy ingredients for the punch.

Do you know where the old man lives?

Has the train arrived?

2. The Imperative Mood states requests, orders, and strong suggestions. The imperative is identical in form to the second person indicative.

E.g. Go there now!

Do not postpone this any longer!

3. The Subjunctive Mood expresses desires, wishes, and assumptions that are not necessarily to be fulfilled in reality. The subjunctive mood has almost disappeared from the language and is thus more difficult to use correctly than either the indicative mood or the imperative mood. The subjunctive mood rarely appears in everyday conversation or writing and is used in a set of specific circumstances. The subjunctive mood allows speakers to form sentences that express commands, requests, suggestions, wishes, hypotheses, purposes, doubts, and suppositions that are contrary to fact at the time of the utterance.

I demand that she leave at once!

If only you were here!

If that be the case, than…

The subjunctive is found in several traditional circumstances. For example, in the sentence "God save the Queen," the verb "*save*" is in the subjunctive mood. Similarly, in the sentence "Heaven forbid," the verb *forbid* is in the subjunctive mood.

The subjunctive is usually found in complex sentences. The subjunctive mood is used in dependent clauses to express unreal conditions and in dependent clauses following verbs of wishing or requesting. The subjunctive mood is used in dependent clauses that do the following:

1) express a wish - *She wishes her boyfriend were here. At that moment, I had the most desperate wish that she had died.*

2) begin with *if* and express a condition that does not exist (is contrary to fact) - *If Juan were more aggressive, he'd be a better hockey player. We would have passed if we had studied harder.*

3) begin with *as if* and *as though* when such clauses describe a speculation or condition contrary to fact - *He acted as if he were guilty.*

4) begin with *that* and express a demand, requirement, request, or suggestion and use a verb such as *to advise (that), to ask (that), to command (that), to demand (that), to desire (that), to insist (that), to order (that), to propose (that), to recommend (that), to request (that), to suggest (that), to urge (that). - I requested that he be present at the hearing.*

The Member of Parliament demanded that the Minister explain the effects of the bill on the environment.

The sergeant ordered that Calvin scrub the walls of the mess hall.

We suggest that Mr. Beatty move the car out of the no parking zone.

The committee recommended that the bill be passed immediately.

5. are attached to independent clauses that use an adjective that expresses urgency such as *It is best (that), It is crucial (that), It is desirable that), It is essential (that), It is imperative (that), It is important (that), It is recommended (that), It is urgent (that), It is vital (that), It is a good idea (that), It is a bad idea (that). - It is urgent that Harraway attend Monday's meeting.*

After many of the above expressions, the word "should" is sometimes used to express the idea of subjunctiveness. This form is used more frequently in British English and is most common after the verbs "suggest," "recommend" and "insist."

e.g.: The doctor *recommended that she should see* a specialist about the problem.

Professor William *suggested that Wilma should study* harder for the final exam.

6. The subjunctive is also used in certain fixed expressions: *as it were, be that as it may be, far be it from me, heaven forbid, if need be, so be it, suffice it to say*

4. The conditional mood is marked by the words *might, could*, and *would*. Frequently, a phrase in the conditional appears closely linked

to a phrase in the subjunctive preceded by a subordinate conjunction like *if* - *If I had known you were coming, I would have baked a cake.*

The conditional mood is a grammatical mood used to express a proposition whose validity is dependent on some condition, possibly counterfactual. It thus refers to a distinct verb form that expresses a hypothetical state of affairs, or an uncertain event. The conditional mood is generally found in the independent clause of a conditional sentence, namely the clause that expresses the result of the condition, rather than the dependent clause expressing the condition. This is exemplified by the English sentence *If you loved me you would support me – would support* is the conditional mood as it expresses the result of the condition.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Identify whether the verb is used transitively or intransitively:

1. The old woman struggled up the hill, pulling a grocery cart that had lost one wheel behind her.
2. Hermione is editing her uncle's memoirs of his lifetime as a green grocer.
3. Much to the amusement of the onlookers, Paul danced a minuet to the polka music that drifted out of the beer tent.
4. At the beginning of the play, the entire cast dances manically across the stage.
5. Stella is reading quietly in the upstairs bedroom instead of doing her chores.
6. This term I am reading all of the works of Sylvia Townsend Warner.
7. At the feast, we will eat heartily.
8. Charles opened up his lunch, examined the contents carefully, and ate his dessert first.
9. The Stephens sisters are both very talented; Virginia writes and Vanessa paints.
10. When I was three years old, my father left a can of paint open

in my bedroom, and early one morning, I painted my baby brother's face green.

Exercise 2. Identify whether the verb is used as a linking verb:

1. Frankenstein is the name of the scientist not the monster.
2. The oenophile tasted several types of Beaujolais.
3. Francine's uncle grows prize winning dahlias.
4. The cheesecake tastes delicious.
5. After smoking three cigars, Flannery turned green.
6. The cat fastidiously smelled the dish of food placed before it.
7. The flowers always grow quickly during a sunny summer.
8. The stew that Gordon made smells too spicy to me.
9. Walter was annoyed because Ross turned pages too quickly.
10. David Garrick was a very prominent eighteenth-century actor.

Exercise 3. Use the verbs in brackets in the correct tenses. Explain your choice.

1 We _____ TV when it started to rain. (to watch)

2. I _____ to visit you yesterday, but you _____ not at home. (to want, to be)

3).Look! It _____, so we can't go to the beach. (to rain)

4. There are a lot of clouds! It _____ soon. (to rain)

5. The sun _____ in the east. (to rise)

6. Since 2011 they _____ their son every year. (to visit)

7. While the doctor _____ Mr Jones, his son _____ outside this morning. (to examine, to wait)

8. I _____ for my girlfriend for two hours. (to wait)

9. After Larry _____ the film on TV, he decided to buy the book. (to see)

10. Wait a minute, I _____ this box for you. (to carry)

11. The police _____ two people early this morning. (to arrest)

12. She _____ to Japan but now she _____ back. (to go, to come)

13. Dan_____ two tablets this year. (already/to buy).

14. I _____ Peter since I_____ last Tuesday. (not/to see, to arrive)

15. Frank _____ his bike last May. So he _____ it for 4 months. (to get, to have)

Exercise 4. Complete the sentences with the correct form, gerund or infinitive, using the words in brackets.

1. The store offered _____ the money I paid for the book I returned. (refund)

2. Don't pretend _____ what you aren't. (be)

3. I persuaded my brother-in-law not _____ that old car. (buy)

4. Annie denied _____ the brick through the window. (throw)

5. My father expects me _____ high marks in school. (get)

6. According to the sign on the restaurant door, all diners are required _____ shirts and shoes. (wear)

7. We are planning _____ several historical sites in Moscow. (visit)

8. There appears _____ no way to change our reservation for the play at this late date. (be)

9. For some strange reason, I keep _____ today is Saturday. (think)

10. All of the members agreed _____ the emergency meeting. (attend)

11. I've arranged _____ work early tomorrow. (leave)

12. Even though Anna had never cut anyone's hair before, she readily consented _____ her husband's hair. (cut)

13. Mary decided _____ her friend's critical remarks. (ignore)

14. My roommate says I have a terrible voice, so I stopped _____ in the shower. (sing)

15. Did the doctor mention _____ any foods in particular? (avoid)

16. The cashier always remembers _____ the money in her cash register each day before she leaves work. (count)

17. Let's hurry! We must finish _____ the office before 3:00 today. (paint)

18. The student with the highest average deserves _____ an "A." (get)

19. I appreciate your _____ for my dinner. I'll buy next time. (pay)

20. The physically handicapped child struggled _____ up with the other children on the playground, but she couldn't. (keep)

21. Janice misses _____ walks with her father in the evening now that she has moved away from home. (take)

22. The customs official demanded _____ what was inside the gift-wrapped box. (know)

23. We've discussed _____ to New York in autumn, but I'm worried about our children having to adjust to a new school system and new friends. (move)

24. Children shouldn't be allowed _____ violent programs on TV (watch)

25. It's not worth _____ (repair) the camera. It would be cheaper to buy a new one.

Exercise 6. Finish the sentences with a clause in the correct conditional:

1. If it is sunny tomorrow _____

_____

2. If you sit in the sun too long _____

_____

3. If I were you _____

_____

4. If I were the Prime Minister _____

5. If she had studied harder _____

6. If I won the lottery _____

7. If I hadn't gone to bed so late _____

8. If I hadn't come to London _____

9. If you mix water and electricity _____

10. If she hadn't stayed at home _____

11. If I go out tonight_____

12. If I were on holiday today _____

Exercise 7. Compare the categories of tense and mood in English with the ones in your mother tongue.

Exercise 8. Suggest your own exercise to one of the verb categories.

Agreement: Matching Sentence Parts

- *The Grammatical Subject of Agreement*
- *Collective Nouns and Indefinite Pronouns*
- *Special Problems in Agreement*
- *Agreement of Pronouns and Antecedents*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Decide whether the following sentences are correct or wrong:

1. ___ Cats and dogs love to run.
2. ___ He don't like chocolate.
3. ___ Her friends or Sarah excel at volleyball.
4. ___ Each of these have been ruined.
5. ___ Trousers are baggy now.
6. ___ The students, as well as the teacher, are nervous about the test.
7. ___ The news are on at 10.
8. ___ My family are a lot of fun.
9. ___ Mathematics is hard for many.
10. ___ The director, with all the cast members, works very hard.

• *The Grammatical Subject of Agreement*

Agreement means that sentence parts match. Subjects must agree with verbs, and pronouns must agree with antecedents. If they do not, the sentences will sound awkward and may confuse listeners and readers. Some things just seem to go together well. We carry this concept over into grammar by matching all sentence parts. This matching of sentence elements is called *agreement.* It helps to create smooth and logical sentences. Most of the concepts of subject verb agreement are straightforward, yet some aspects of singular and plural usage in English grammar are more complicated.

The basic rule of sentence agreement is simple: ***A subject must agree with its verb in number.*** This is the cornerstone rule that forms the background of the concept**.**

1. Singular and plural nouns

In English, the plurals of most nouns are formed by adding *-s* or *-es* to the singular form. For example: bike → bikes; race → races; inch → inches. Some nouns have irregular plurals, such as mouse → mice; woman → women, goose → geese.

2. Singular and plural pronouns

Pronouns have singular and plural forms, too: I, you, she, he, it we, they.

3. Singular and plural verbs

As with nouns and pronouns, verbs show singular and plural forms. The rule introduced at the beginning of this unit: *A subject must agree with its verb in number.* All the other rules follow from this one.

- *A singular subject must have a singular verb.*

1. A singular subject must have a singular verb: a) *She hesitates* at all intersections, making the other drivers angry (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *she* agrees with the singular verb *hesitates.* b) *Procrastination is* the art of keeping up with yesterday (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *procrastination* agrees with the singular verb *is.*

2. Two or more singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* must have a singular verb. This makes perfect sense: You are making a choice between two singular subjects. The *or* shows that you are only choosing one: a) Either the dog *or* the cat *has* to go (sing. subject. *or* sing. subject sing. verb). Only one pet will go—the dog or the cat. Therefore, you will only have one pet left. Two singular subjects—*dog* and *cat*—joined by *or* take the singular verb *has.* b) Neither Elvis Costello *nor* Elvis Presley *is* in the room (sing. subject *nor* sing. subject sing. verb). Each subject is being treated individually. Therefore, two singular subjects—*Elvis Costello* and *Elvis Presley*—joined by *nor* take the singular verb *is.*

3. Subjects that are singular in meaning but plural in form require a singular verb. These subjects include words such as *measles, civics,*

social studies, mumps, molasses, news, economics, physics and *mathematics:* The *news is* on every night at 11:00 P.M (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *news* takes the singular verb *is.*

4. Plural subjects that function as a single unit take a singular verb: a) *Spaghetti and meatballs is* my favourite dish (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *spaghetti and meatballs* requires the singular verb *is*. b) *Bacon and eggs makes* a great late night snack (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *bacon and eggs* agrees with the singular verb *makes.*

5. Titles are always singular. It doesn't matter how long the title is, what it names, or whether or not it sounds plural— a title always takes a singular verb: a) *For Whom the Bell Tolls is* a story about the Spanish Civil War (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular title *For Whom the Bell Tolls* requires the singular verb *is*. b) *Stranger in a Strange Land* was written by Robert Heinlein (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular title *Stranger in a Strange Land* requires the singular verb was.

Most measurements are singular—even though they look plural. For example: "*Half a dollar/ two years/ ten pounds is* more than enough" (not "*are* more than enough").

6. The following expressions have no effect on the verb: *together with, accompanied by, along with, as well as:*

E.g.: *The actress, accompanied by her manager and some friends, is* going to a party tonight.

- *A Plural Subject Must Have a Plural Verb*

Just as a singular subject requires a singular verb, so a plural subject requires a plural verb. Here are some examples:

1. A plural subject must have a plural verb: a) *Men are* from Earth. *Women are* from Earth. Deal with it (plural subject plural verb plural subject plural verb). The plural subject *men* requires the plural verb *are.* The plural subject *women* requires the plural verb *are.* b) On average, *people fear* spiders more than *they do* death. (plural subject plural verb plural subject plural verb). The plural subject *people* requires the plural verb *fear* (not the singular verb *fears*). The plural subject *they* requires the plural verb *do* (not the singular verb *does*). c)

Facetious and *abstemious contain* all the vowels in the correct order, as does arsenious, meaning "containing arsenic." (plural subject plural verb). The plural subject *facetious and abstemious* requires the plural verb *contain* (not the singular verb *contains.*) Think of the conjunction *and* as a plus sign. Whether the parts of the subject joined by *and* are singular or plural (or both), they all add up to a plural subject and so require a plural verb.

2. Two or more plural subjects joined by *or* or *nor* must have a plural verb. This is the logical extension of the earlier rule about two or more singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* taking a singular verb. Here, since both subjects are plural, the verb must be plural as well: a) Either the *children or* the *adults are* clearing the table (plural subject plural subject plural verb). Since both subjects are plural, one of them alone is still plural. Therefore, two plural subjects—*children* and *adults*—joined by *or* take the plural verb *are.* b) Neither my *relatives nor* my *friends are* leaving any time soon (plural subject plural subject plural verb). Since both subjects are plural, one of them alone is still plural. Therefore, two plural subjects—*relatives* and *friends*—joined by *nor* take the plural verb *are.*

3. A compound subject joined by *and* is plural and must have a plural verb. The conjunction *and* acts like a plus (+) sign, showing that 1 + 1 = 2 (or 1 + 1 + 1 = 3, etc.): a) *Brownies* and *ice cream are* a spectacular dessert (plural subject sing. subject plural verb). b) *Nina and Christopher have* donated money to charity (sing. subject sing. subject plural verb). Nina and Christopher = two people. 1 + 1 = 2. Therefore, the verb must be plural: have.

4. If two or more singular and plural subjects are joined by *or* or *nor,* the subject closest to the verb determines agreement: a) *Margery or* the *twins are* coming on the trip to Seattle (sing. subject plural subject plural verb). Since the plural subject *twins* is closest to the verb, the verb is plural: *are.* b) The *twins or Margery is* coming on the trip to Seattle (plural subject sing. subject sing. verb). Since the singular subject *Margery* is closest to the verb, the verb is singular: *is.*

5. If the sentence contains a positive and a negative subject and one is plural, the other singular, the verb should agree with the positive subject. For example:

1. The department members but not the chair have decided not to teach on Valentine's Day.

2. It is not the faculty members but the president who decides this issue.

3. It was the speaker, not his ideas, that has provoked the students to riot.

6. The noun *police* is always followed by a plural noun. For example: *The police **are** helping to evacuate the population from flooded areas.*

- ***Collective Nouns and Indefinite Pronouns***

A *collective noun* names a group of people or things. Collective nouns include the words *class, committee, government, jury, team, audience, assembly, team, crowd, club.* Collective nouns can be singular or plural, depending on how they are used in a sentence. Here are the basic guidelines:

- A collective noun is considered *singular* when it functions as a single unit. Collective nouns used as one unit take a singular verb.
- A collective noun is considered *plural* when the group it identifies is considered to be individuals. Collective nouns that indicate many units take a plural verb.

Here are some examples:

a) The *team has practiced* for tonight's big game for months (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *team* agrees with the singular verb *has practiced* because in this instance, the team functions as one (singular) group.

b) The *team have practiced* for tonight's big game for months (plural subject plural verb). The subject *team* becomes plural because each member of the group is now being considered as an individual.

- *Majority* can be singular or plural. If it is used alone, it is usually singular; if followed by a plural noun, it is usually plural:

E.g.: *The majority believes* that we are in danger.

The majority of the students believe him to be innocent.

- The following nouns are used to indicate groups of certain animals. It is necessary to learn the nouns; however, they mean the same as *group* and are considered singular: *flock of birds, sheep; herd of cattle; pack of dogs, wolves; school of fish; pride of lions, peacocks; army of caterpillars, frogs; brood of hens; colony of ants, bats, penguins; gaggle of geese; hive of bees; host of sparrows; murder of crows; parliament of owls.*
- Collective nouns indicating time, money and measurements used as a whole are singular:

E.g.: *Twenty-five dollars is* too much to pay for that shirt.

Fifty minutes isn't enough time to finish this test.

- *A number of/ the number of:*

A number of + plural noun + plural verb

The number of + plural noun + singular verb.

E.g. *A number of students are* going to the class picnic (a number of = many).

The number of days in a week *is* seven.

- Fractional expressions such as half of, a part of, a percentage of are sometimes singular and sometimes plural, depending on the meaning. Sums and products of mathematical processes are expressed as singular and require singular verbs. The expression "more than one" takes a singular verb: "More than one student has tried this." For example:

1. Some of the voters are still angry.
2. A large percentage of the older population is voting against her.
3. Two-fifths of the troops were lost in the battle.
4. Two-fifths of the vineyard was destroyed by fire.
5. Forty per cent of the students are in favour of changing the policy.
6. Five per cent of the situation is Bob's faults.

7. Two and two is four.

8. Four times four divided by two is eight.

• *Indefinite pronouns,* like collective nouns, can be singular or plural, depending on how they are used in a sentence. Indefinite pronouns refer to people, places, objects, or things without pointing to a specific one. Indefinite pronouns include words such as *everyone, someone, all,* and *more.*

Singular indefinite pronouns take a singular verb.

Plural indefinite pronouns take a plural verb.

The following chart shows singular and plural indefinite pronouns. The chart also shows pronouns that can be either singular or plural, depending on how they are used in a sentence.

Singular	Plural	Singular or Plural
another	both	all
anybody	few	any
anyone	many	more
anything	others	most
each	several	none
either		some
everyone		no
everybody		
everything		
little		
much		
neither		
nobody		
no one		
nothing		
one		
other		
somebody		
someone		
something		

If we look back at the chart, we will see that the following patterns emerge:

1. Indefinite pronouns that end in -*body* are always singular. These words include *anybody, somebody, nobody.*

2. Indefinite pronouns that end in -*one* are always singular. These words include *anyone, everyone, someone,* and *one.*

3. The indefinite pronouns *both, few, many, others,* and *several* are always plural.

4. The indefinite pronouns *all, any, more, most, none,* and *some* can be singular or plural, depending on how they are used. Here are some examples:

a) *One* of the gerbils *is* missing (sing. subject sing. verb). The singular subject *one* requires the singular verb *is.*

b) *Both* of the gerbils *are* missing (plural subject plural verb). The plural subject *both* requires the plural verb *are.*

c) *All* of the beef stew *was* devoured (sing. subject sing. verb). In this instance, *all* is being used to indicate one unit. As a result, it requires the singular verb *was.*

d) *Many* of the guests *are* sick of Tedious Ted's endless chatter (plural subject plural verb). The plural subject *many* requires the plural verb *are.*

5. *None* can take either a singular or plural verb depending on the noun which follows it:

a) None + of the + non-count noun + singular verb:

E.g.: None of the counterfeit *money has* been found.

b) None + of the + plural count noun + plural verb:

E.g.: None of the *students have* finished the exam yet.

6. *No* can take either singular or plural verb depending on the noun which follows it:

a) No + {singular noun } + singular verb
non-count noun

E.g.: No example is relevant to this case.

b) *No + plural noun + plural verb*

E.g.: No examples are relevant to this case.

- ***Special Problems in Agreement***

The rules for agreement are straightforward, but some thorny problems do arise. Here are the two most challenging issues: hard-to-find subjects and intervening phrases.

1. Hard-to-find subjects should be identified. Some subjects can be harder to find than others. Subjects that come after the verb are especially tricky. However, a subject must still agree in number with its verb, as the following examples show:

a) At the bottom of the lake there *are* two old *cars (*plural verb plural subject). The plural subject *cars* agrees with the plural verb *are.*

b) There *were* still half a dozen *tyres* in the lake, too (plural verb plural subject). The plural subject *tyres* requires the plural verb *were.*

2. Intervening phrases should be ignored. Words or phrases that come between the subject and the verb should be disregarded. A phrase or clause that comes between a subject and its verb does not affect subject-verb agreement:

a) The strongest *muscle in the body is* the tongue (sing. subject prep. phrase sing. verb). The singular subject *muscle* agrees with the singular verb *is.* Ignore the intervening prepositional phrase "in the body."

b) The *captain of the guards stands* at the door of Buckingham Palace (sing. subject prep. phrase sing. verb). The singular subject *captain* agrees with the singular verb *stands.* Ignore the intervening

prepositional phrase "of the guards."

c) *The dog, who is chewing on my jeans, is usually very good.*

3. When sentences start with "there" or "here," the subject will always be placed after the verb, so care needs to be taken to identify it correctly.

E.g. *There is a problem with the balance sheet.*

There are lots of plans and only a vase in the living room.

Here are the papers you requested.

- ***Agreement of Pronouns and Antecedents***

Like subjects and verbs, pronouns and antecedents (the words to which they refer) must agree. These are the rules that will be followed to make sure that pronouns and antecedents match.

1. A pronoun agrees (or matches) with its antecedent in *number, person,* and *gender:* Jenny gave half her cupcake to Shirley. Both the antecedent *Jenny* and the pronoun *her* are singular in number, in the third person, and feminine in gender. Errors often occur when there are incorrect shifts in person and gender.

Error: *Jenny* will eat her bran flakes and tofu, which *you* need to stay healthy.

Correct: *Jenny* will eat her bran flakes and tofu, which *she* needs to stay healthy.

2. A singular personal pronoun is used with a singular indefinite pronoun: If *anyone* questions the edict, refer *him* or *her* to the boss. The singular pronouns *him* or *her* refer to the singular pronoun *anyone.*

3. A plural pronoun is used when the antecedents are joined by *and.* This is true even if the antecedents are singular: The *dog* and *cat* maintain *their* friendship by staying out of each other's way (sing. subject sing. subject plural pronoun). Since the two singular antecedents *dog* and *cat* are joined by *and,* the plural pronoun *their* is used. This is a case of 1 + 1 = 2 (one dog + one cat = two pets).

4. Antecedents joined by *or, nor,* or correlative conjunctions such as *either . . . or, neither . . . nor* agree with the antecedent closer to the pronoun:

a) Neither my baby *sister* or the *twins* sleep in *their* bed (sing. subject plural subject plural pronoun). The plural pronoun *their* is used to agree with the plural antecedent *cats.*

b) Neither the *twins* nor my baby *sister* sleeps in *her* bed (plural subject sing. subject sing. pronoun). The singular pronoun *her* is used to agree with the singular antecedent *sister.*

5. The pronoun should refer directly to the noun. Confusion occurs when the pronoun can refer to more than one antecedent.

Confusing: Norman saw a coupon in last year's newspaper, but he can't find *it.*

What is it that Norman can't find: the coupon or the newspaper?

Correct: Norman can't find the coupon he saw in last year's newspaper.

6. The need for pronoun-antecedent agreement can create gender problems. If one were to write, for instance, "A student must see his counsellor before the end of the semester," when there are female students about, nothing but grief will follow. One can pluralize, in this situation, to avoid the problem: for example:

1. Students must see **their** counsellor before the end of the semester.

Or, one could say

2. A student must see **his** or **her** counsellor. . . .

Too many his's and her's eventually become annoying, however, and the reader becomes more aware of the writer trying to be conscious of good form than he or she is of the matter at hand. We can use they, them, their and theirs to refer to both sexes at the same time, even when a singular noun has been used, although some people consider this unacceptable. However, in present-day English, this usage is becoming more accepted:

Every student must show their identity card on entering the examination room. (preferred to Every student must show his identity card.)

A nurse has to be very open and understanding. They must listen to their patients and respond to them. (preferred to She must listen to her patients. or He must listen to his patients.)

It is also widely regarded as being correct (or correct enough), at the beginning of the twenty-first century, to say

- Somebody has left **their** bag on the floor.

but many people would object to its being written that way because somebody is singular and their is plural.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Select the word that best completes each sentence.

1. The pop you get when you crack your knuckles (are, is) actually a bubble of gas bursting.

2. Polar bears (is, are) left-handed.

3. The name of all the continents (ends, end) with the same letter that they start with.

4. No president of the United States (were, was) an only child.

5. Everyone (are, is) entitled to an opinion.

6. Here is some good advice: Don't sneeze when someone (is, are) cutting your hair.

7. If a man (are, is) wearing a striped suit, it's against the law to throw a knife at him in Natoma, Kansas.

8. In 1659, Massachusetts (mades, made) Christmas illegal.

9. Unless you have a doctor's note, it (are, is) illegal to buy ice cream after 6 P.M. in Newark, New Jersey.

10. It is a misdemeanour to show films that (depicts, depict) acts of felonious crime in Montana.

11. I (drives, drive) way too fast to worry about cholesterol.

12. If Barbie (are, is) so popular, why do you have to (buys, buy) her friends?

13. Many people (quits, quit) looking for work when they find a job.

14. A Rolling Stone (play, plays) the guitar.

15. It's always darkest just before I (open, opens) my eyes.

16. The squeaking wheel (get, gets) annoying.

17. A journey of a thousand miles (begin, begins) with a blister.

18. Don't count your chickens—it (take, takes) too long.

19. Donald Duck comics (was, were) banned from Finland because he doesn't wear pants.

Exercise 2. Correct all errors in agreement in the following paragraph.

A. Two people left a 15-mile-long trail of doughnuts after they tooks a doughnut lorry from a parking area and fled, police said Thursday.

The lorry were parked at a convenience store with its rear doors open and its engine running while a deliveryman carried doughnuts inside, said a Slidell police spokesman. Two suspects hopped in the lorry and sped off to the nearby town of Lacombe, with doughnuts spilling out along the way, he said. They abandoned the lorry when they was spotted by police responding to reports of a dangerous driver who were losing his doughnuts. A passenger were captured, but the driver, whose name were not released, ran away. Their motive for taking the lorry filled with doughnuts were unclear. "I don't know if it were a need for transportation or if they just had the munchies," the police said.

B. A wife are complaining about her husband spending all his time at the local tavern, so one night he take her along with him. "What'll ya have?" he ask. "Oh, I don't know. The same as you, I suppose," she reply. So the husband order a couple of Jack Daniels and gulp his down in one go. His wife watch him, then take a sip from her glass and immediately spit it out. "Yuck, it tastes awful, worse than awful!" she splutter. "I don't know how you can drink this stuff!" "Well, there you goes," cry the husband. "And you thinks I'm out enjoying myself every night!"

Exercise 3. From the choices provided after each sentence, select a word that would correctly complete the sentence.

1. The piano as well as the pipe organ _____ to be tuned for the big concert (has, have).
2. The mayor together with his two brothers _____ going to be indicted for accepting bribes (are, is).
3. Neither of my two suitcases _____ adequate for this trip (is, are).
4. There _____ a list of committee members on the head-table (are, is).
5. Everybody in the class _____ done the homework well in advance (has, have).
6. The jury _____ their seats in the courtroom (take, takes).

7. Neither the teacher nor the students _____ to understand this assignment (seem, seems).

8. _____ either my father or my brothers made a down-payment on the house? (has, have).

9. Hartford is one of those cities that _____ working hard to reclaim a riverfront (is, are).

Hint: try starting the sentence with "of those cities that . . . ."

10. Some of the grain _____ gone bad (have, has).

11. John or his brother _____ going to be responsible for this (are, is).

12. A few of the students _____ doing so well they can skip the next course (are, is).

13. Either the committee on course design or the committee on college operations _____ these matters (decide, decides).

14. One of my instructors _____ written a letter of recommendation for me (have, has).

14. Neither of us _____ able to predict the outcome of today's game (was, were).

15. Macaroni and cheese _____ my favourite dish (is, are).

Exercise 4. Identify the subject and choose the correct verb in each of the following sentence.

1. Each of the men (were/was) given ten minutes to speak to the president of the company.

2. Beyond the river (is/are) a dress store and a shoe store.

3. Here (is/are) your notebook and dictionary.

4. Neither of the corporations (has/have) received the necessary state charter yet.

5. My entire supply of checks (was/were) missing.

6. Physics (is/are) taken by many students to complete their science requirement.

7. A natural monopoly (is/are) public utilities.

8. Neither of the unions (has/have) studied the working conditions yet.

9. Sitting in the chair by the file cabinets (is/are) the secretary.

10. The data (was/were) published by the company.
11. The cost of goods (vary/varies) greatly in the different states.
12. Where (is/are) one of the letters from Brown and Company?
13. Neither of the salespersons (wants/want) to help me.
14. One of the trademarks (has/have) not been registered yet.
15. Five per cent of the profits (is/are) to be distributed to the stockholders.
16. Food tests taken on Friday (confirm/confirms) my original diagnosis.
17. Neither the employers nor the union (desire/desires) a strike vote.
18. Neither the size nor the colour of the envelopes (are/is) correct.
19. Each of the loans (has/have) been recalled by the bank.
20. The news of the economic decline (has/have) been upsetting.
21. Everyone who bought stocks last year (has/have) hoped to see an increase in their value.
22. The Seattle Times (is/are) sold widely.
23. Neither the rain nor the dropping temperatures (suggest/ suggests) good weather over the weekend.
24. One of the children who (play/plays) soccer so very well is sitting on the side-lines.

Exercise 5. The following paragraph contains six mistakes in subject-verb agreement. Find and correct each of the six verb mistakes.

Santa

According to legend, Santa Claus is a fat old man who visits every house on our planet in about eight hours on one of the coldest nights of the year. Santa, as everybody knows, stop for a glass of milk and a cookie at each house along the route. He prefer to work unnoticed, so he wears luminous red suit and travels with a pack of bell-jangling reindeer. For reasons that most people does not understand, this jolly old man enters each house not by the front door but through the chimney (whether you has a chimney or not). He customarily gives

generously to children in wealthy families, and he usually remind poorer children that it's the thought that counts. Santa Claus is one of the earliest beliefs that parents try to instil in their children. After this absurdity, it's a wonder that any child ever believe in anything again.

Exercise 8. How similar or different are the guidelines for the agreement of pronouns and their antecedents in English and Romanian?

Exercise 9. Suggest your own exercise for grammatical agreement.

The Most Common Usage Problems

- *Usage versus Grammar*
- *The Top Writing Errors*
- *Most Common Sentence Errors*
- *Most Common Spelling Errors*
- *Most Common Punctuation Errors*
- *Most Common Capitalization Errors*
- *Improve Your Writing, One Step at a Time*

• *Usage versus Grammar*

English is today's lingua franca; its evolution is driven by the current demands for information and the need for global communication. It has unarguably become an important academic and professional tool. It is recognized as the most important language through which the increasingly mobile international community interacts and learns. However, despite its worldwide use, English is still considered the most difficult European language to learn and read, primarily because its unique characteristics hinder non-native English speakers from obtaining a strong command of it. English is also unique in its uses of articles. When combined with the fact that English is an unphonetic language and possesses other small peculiarities, it is a daunting challenge to learn and master.

Usage designates rules concerning how we should use the language in certain situations. These sentences, for instance, violate formal usage:

She dresses beautiful.

She ain't got no dress.

Sentences like these are often heard in speech, but both break rules governing how educated people write. Formal usage dictates that when *beautiful* functions as an adverb it takes an -ly ending, that *ain't* and a double negative like *ain't got no* or *haven't got no* should be avoided.

Grammar and usage are often confused. Many people would argue that the sentences above are "ungrammatical." Grammatical rules are implicit in the speech of all who use the language. Usage

rules, on the other hand, stem from and change with social pressure. *Ain't*, for example, was once acceptable. The adverbial use of an adjective like *beautiful* was common in seventeenth-century prose. Chaucer and Shakespeare use double negatives for emphasis.

The fact that usage rules are less basic than grammatical ones, however, and even that they may seem arbitrary, does not lessen their force. Most of them contribute to clarity and economy of expression. Moreover, usage applies to all levels of purpose and strategy, to informal, colloquial styles as well as to formal ones. For example, grammatically incomplete sentences (or fragments), frowned upon in formal usage, are occasionally permissible and even valuable in informal composition.

Usage is about individual words and phrases; there are no rules or logical explanations for the way they behave - it's just how we happen to say things. For the learner who is looking for patterns in language, this can be frustrating because usage has to be learned case by case.

When someone complains that a person "can't write," they are most often referring to errors that person makes in grammar and usage. Below are several usage problems.

- ***The Top Writing Errors***

<u>*Grammar and Usage*</u>

1. Lack of clarity
2. Redundancy (unnecessary words)
3. Problems with subject-verb agreement
4. Lack of parallel structures
5. Wrong verb tense
6. Dangling elements
7. Misplaced modifiers
8. Biased language
9. Incorrect voice (active versus passive voice)

Sentences

10. Fragments (incomplete sentences)
11. Run-ons (two sentences run together)

Spelling

12. Missing letters
13. Extra letters
14. Transposed letters
15. Incorrect plurals
16. Errors in confusing word pairs (such as *weather/whether*)

Punctuation

17. Missing commas or extra commas
18. Missing or misused apostrophes
19. Misused exclamation marks
20. Misused semicolons

Capitalization

21. Proper nouns not capitalized
22. Errors in titles

Proofreading

23. Missing words

1. Lack of clarity

Incorrect: Prehistoric people used many inorganic substances difficult to find at archaeological sites, which included clay and rock.

Correct: Prehistoric people used many inorganic substances, including clay and rock, which are difficult to find at archaeological sites.

Sentences can be confusing for many different reasons. In the previous example, too many phrases come between the pronoun and its antecedent. As a result, the pronoun reference gets confusing. This can happen even if the intervening material is logically related to the rest of the sentence, as is the case here.

√ One sentence = one complete thought. Too much information must not be crammed into one sentence.

√ The more complex the ideas, the shorter and more simple the sentences should be.

√ **A**ll parts of the sentence must be logically related. Are they in the same tense, for example?

√ The sentences must be reread to make sure all pronouns refer to their antecedents and are placed as close as possible to them.

√ The sentence must be checked for correct punctuation.

2. Redundancy (unnecessary words)

Redundancy means to use more words than are necessary to convey a meaning. For example, *free gift* is redundant because a *gift* is something that is received at no cost, (i.e. gifts are always free). Similarly, *sink down* is redundant since sink means to move down. It is easy for redundancy to creep into the language when writers and speakers are either not aware of a word's definition or they employ a phrase that is commonly used to the point that it "sounds right."

Redundancy is related to wordiness – which is the use of too many words. The most important distinction is that redundancy uses words with the same meaning, while wordiness uses more words than are needed. Both redundancy and wordiness should be avoided.

Incorrect: If you reread your work, you will find upon serious reconsideration that a great deal of repetition can be avoided by careful editing and revising and attentive re-evaluation. Scrupulous editing can also help you make your writing less wordy.

Correct: If you reread your work, you will find that a great deal of repetition can be avoided by careful editing.

Long-winded writing may sound educated and impressive, but it actually turns off the audience because it wastes their time. The writing must be concise, as it will be more intelligible, it will communicate its message directly.

3. Problems with subject-verb agreement

Incorrect: Verbs has to agree with their subjects.

Correct: Verbs have to agree with their subjects.

Agreement means that sentence parts match, singular to singular and plural to plural. Since the subject *verbs* is plural, it takes a plural verb, *agree.*

This is confusing because we add *-s* or *-es* to make the third-person *singular* form of most *verbs* but add *-s* or *-es* to make the *plural* form of most *nouns*. For example, *he starts* is singular, but *six papers* is plural. Both end in *s*.

4. Lack of parallel structures

Sentence elements that are parallel in thought and function must be parallel in form. Parallel elements in a sentence are two or more words, phrases, or clauses that occur together and have the same grammatical function and the same importance of thought. Parallel structure, when used correctly, creates a symmetrical, graceful construction that is pleasing to the reader. Parallel structure used incorrectly can make writing appear sloppy and can confuse a reader.

Not parallel: To avoid getting hit by lightning, never seek protection under a tree, lying down on wet ground, or staying on a bike.

Parallel: To avoid getting hit by lightning, never seek protection under a tree, lie down on wet ground, or stay on a bike.

5. Wrong verb tense

Incorrect: President John Quincy Adams *owns* a pet alligator, which he kept in the East Room of the White House.

Correct: President John Quincy Adams *owned* a pet alligator, which he kept in the East Room of the White House.

The *tense* of a verb shows its time. In the example here, the action takes place in the past, so the past tense must be used.

6. Dangling elements

A dangling element is a verbal phrase (participle, gerund*, or infinitive) used without an explicit subject or when the word it refers to has been left out of the sentence. Because this phrase has no stated subject to which it can refer, it unintentionally refers to an inappropriate subject in the main clause and confuses your reader.

Incorrect: Flying over the countryside, cars and houses looked like toys.

Correct: As we flew over the countryside, cars and houses looked like toys.

Two ways to correct a dangling element are:

1. Use the noun or pronoun that the dangling element refers to as the subject of the main clause.

2. Turn the dangling element into a clause with its own subject.

In other words, a dangling element should refer or "stick to" the nearest subject, and that subject in turn should be the subject of the dangling element. For example:

Incorrect: To avoid stress, all assignments must be started ahead of time.

Correct: To avoid stress, you should start your assignments ahead of time.

Dangling elements confuse the readers and obscure the meaning because the sentence does not make sense.

Another mangled construction is the *dangling participles*. A *participle* is a verb ending in *-ing*. It is *dangling* when the subject of the participle and the subject of the sentence do not agree. For example:

Incorrect: Rushing to finish the paper, Bob's printer broke. The subject is Bob's printer, but the printer is not doing the rushing.

Correct: While Bob was rushing to finish the paper, his printer broke.

One way to tell whether the participle is dangling is to put the clause with the participle right after the subject of the sentence: "Bob's printer, rushing to finish the paper, broke." It is obvious that it does not sound right.

Note: Not all words that end in *-ing* are participles. For example: "Completing the task by Tuesday is your next assignment." The word *completing* functions as a noun, not a verb, so it is a gerund.

7. Misplaced modifiers

A *modifier* is a word or phrase that describes a subject, verb, or object. (To "modify" is to qualify the meaning.).

Incorrect: My parents bought a kitten for my sister they call Paws.

Correct: My parents bought a kitten they call Paws for my sister.

A *misplaced modifier* is a phrase, clause, or word placed too far from the noun or pronoun it describes. As a result, the sentence fails to convey the exact meaning. As this sentence is written, it means that the

sister, not the kitten, is named Paws. That is because the modifier *they call Paws* is in the wrong place in the sentence. To correct a misplaced modifier, the modifier should be moved as close as possible to the word or phrase it describes.

Incorrect: During this year, a new organization was founded at our college called the Chess Club (Is the college called the chess club? No).

Correct: A new organization, the chess club, was founded at our college this year.

8. Biased language

Incorrect: That old geezer is taking my parking space!

Correct: That man is taking my parking space!

Biased language is any language that stereotypes people, is not inclusive and does not attempt to create a sense of community. Language that denigrates people because of their age, gender, race, or physical condition must be avoided. This is especially crucial in business, where such language could result in a lawsuit.

9. Incorrect voice (active versus passive voice)

Because much published material is written in the passive voice, we frequently misidentify the passive voice as "academic." The passive voice becomes more an opportunity to deflect blame than to do anything else. Passive constructions are also frequently wordy, pompous, vague, and misleading.

The active voice, on the other hand, makes a sentence clear and lively. An active construction has a *subject*, a transitive *verb*, and a direct *object*, whereas in a passive construction the *object* of the action of the verb is the grammatical *subject* of the sentence. Active voice follows a standard English subject-verb-object word order; for example: *My cat broke the vase.*

A version of the sentence in the passive voice is: *The vase was broken.*

However, there are times when a passive construction may be the better choice. Consider these two versions of the same idea:

E.g. In the sweatshops, the employees, mostly immigrant women, were exploited and dehumanized.[*Revision*: *The managers of the sweatshops exploited and dehumanized their employees, who were mostly immigrant women*.]

Since the active construction focuses attention on the exploiters and the passive construction emphasizes their suffering employees, the writer of a paper about the experience of exploited laborers might appropriately decide to use the passive version. Another circumstance under which the passive voice is sometimes appropriate is in scientific writing, where the identity of the experimenter is irrelevant to the description of an experimental procedure or to the results of the experiment.

*E.g. My lab partner and I measured the diameter of the rod with the Vernier caliper. [Too personal.] [*Revision: *The diameter of the rod was measured with the Vernier caliper*.]

However, even scientific writers should use the active voice whenever they can do so without making a personal reference.

*E.g. In the diagram above, a magnified image is formed by lens L. [Passive voice is unnecessary.] [*Revision*: In the diagram above, lens L forms a magnified image.]*

Scientific writers should also be careful not to let necessary use of the passive degenerate into wordiness or pomposity.

Even though the active voice is stronger than the passive voice, the passive voice should be used in these two situations:

- To avoid placing blame ("A mistake was made" rather than "You made a mistake.")
- To avoid identifying the doer of the action ("The letter was sent" rather than "Nicole sent the letter.")

- ***Most Common Sentence Errors***

1. Fragments (incomplete sentences)

Fragment: If you want to be clearly understood.

Correct: Don't write sentence fragments if you want to be clearly understood.

Every sentence must have three things:

- A subject: the "doer" of the action. The subject will be a noun or pronoun.
- A verb: what the subject does.
- A complete thought.

The fragment in this example is missing a subject and a verb. As a result, the group of words does not express a complete thought.

2. Run-ons (two sentences run together)

Run-on: Daddy longlegs spiders are more poisonous than black widows, daddy longlegs spiders cannot bite humans because their jaws won't open wide enough.

Correct: Daddy longlegs spiders are more poisonous than black widows, *but* daddy longlegs spiders cannot bite humans because their jaws won't open wide enough.***or*** Daddy longlegs spiders are more poisonous than black widows; however, daddy longlegs cannot bite humans because their jaws won't open wide enough.

In order to avoid run-on sentences (phrases that run together with inadequate punctuation, sometimes called *fused sentences*), we should remember that *every sentence must be followed by the correct terminal punctuation.* You can usually correct run-on sentences by breaking them into two or more separate sentences; however, other methods include inserting a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet*), inserting a semicolon, or subordinating one clause to another. For the run-on sentence *There is a blizzard I don't want to go to class* one could employ any of the following solutions:

1. *There is a blizzard. I don't want to go to class.*

[The two clauses are separated into two sentences.]

2. *There is a blizzard, so I don't want to go to class.*

[The two clauses are separated by a comma and the coordinating conjunction so.]

3. *There is a blizzard; I don't want to go to class.*

[The two clauses are separated by a semicolon.]

4. *Because there is a blizzard, I don't want to go to class.*

[Because subordinates the first clause to the second.

- ***Most Common Spelling Errors***

Writers often misspell words because they mispronounce them. The three most common mistakes are:

- Dropping a letter or syllable when we say a word.
- Adding an unnecessary letter when we say a word.
- Mispronouncing a word and so misspelling it.

1. Missing letters

Here are 10 words that are frequently misspelled because the speaker drops a letter or syllable.

- *Accidentally:* The word has five syllables; drop one and *accidentally* becomes *accidently.*
- *Accompaniment:* The second *a* and the only *i* are the problems with *accompaniment.*
- *Acreage:* The *e* presents the spelling problem because it is rarely stressed in speech. That's how people end up with *acrage.* It's also common for writers to misplace the *e,* as in *acerage.*
- *Anecdote:* Letters are dropped when writers mispronounce *anecdote* as *anedote.* Then there is *antidote*—a legitimate word, but the wrong one in context.
- *Asked:* This word is mangled as *ast* or even *axed.* This results in such curious spellings as *askd, askt,* and *axst.*
- *Asterisk:* This word can end up spelled *aterisk, askterisk,* or even *acksterisk.*
- *Broccoli:* It is not hard to drop a *c* and add an *l* with this word.
- *Callisthenics:* Stress the first *i* and the *e* to avoid dropping these letters when you spell *callisthenics (*a system of) simple physical exercises that are done to make the body firm, able to stretch easily and more attractive*)*. Otherwise, you could end up with *calesthenics* or *calesthinics.*
- *Category:* Make sure to say that *e* as an *e* rather than an *a* to avoid the misspelling *catagory.*
- *Cemetery: Cemetary* is the result when the third *e* is pronounced as an *a.*

2. Extra letters

Because of errors in pronunciation, spellers often insert an unnecessary vowel between two letters. Here are some of the most commonly misspelled words:

- *Athlete:* Often mispronounced as *athalete,* resulting in that unnecessary *a.*
- *Disastrous:* The word ends up with *disaster* stuck in there: *disasterous.*
- *Grievous:* Another common speech slip results in *grieveous* or *grievious.*
- *Hindrance:* This word falls prey to the same problem as *disastrous.*
- *Lightning:* The bolt of electricity on a stormy night is often mispronounced and thus misspelled as *lightening.* Now, *lightening* is a legitimate word; it means that something is getting less dark. Say each letter to help you spell the word you want.
- *Mischievous:* A surprising number of people mispronounce the word as *mischievious,* adding an extra *i.*
- *Perseverance:* People often add an extra *r,* resulting in *perserverance.* Saying the word correctly will prevent this error.

Long-time speakers and readers of English have learned basic connections between sounds and letter combinations that help them spell a large number of words. However, for historical reasons, certain combinations of letters are not always pronounced in the same way. For example, ough can be pronounced differently as in thought, bough, through, drought.

3. Transposed letters

Mispronunciation can also result in scrambled letters. Here are some words especially prone to switched letters: *aesthetic, allegiance, analysis, analyse, anonymous, auxiliary, bureaucrat, diaphragm, entrepreneur, gasoline, gauge, gorgeous, irrelevant, khaki, lingerie, mileage, psychology, resuscitate, rhyme, rhythm.*

4. Incorrect plurals

There are regular plurals and irregular ones. The regular plurals rarely result in spelling errors, but irregular plurals often cause trouble. Keep regular and irregular plurals straight and the spelling errors will be eliminated. Below are some spelling rules to help you form the correct plurals.

- Most regular plurals are formed by adding *s* to the end of the word.
- Add *e*s if the noun ends in *s, sh, ch,* or *x:* class – classes; inch – inches; box – boxes; stress –stresses; tax – taxes;
- If the noun ends in *y* preceded by a *consonant,* change the *y* to *i* and add *es:* city – cities; lady – ladies; happy – happiness;
- If the noun ends in *y* preceded by a *vowel,* add *s:* essay – essays; monkey – monkeys; journey – journeys;

Exception: Words that end in *-quy,* as in *soliloquy,* which becomes *soliloquies* /səˈlɪl.ə.kwi/ a speech in a play which the character speaks to him- or herself or to the people watching rather than to the other characters.

- Words that end in *-ly* keep the *y* when they become plural: bialy bialys (a flat breakfast roll that has a depressed centre and is usually covered with onion flakes)

  Exceptions: dollies; lilies.
- If the noun ends in *o* preceded by a *vowel,* add *s:* radio – radios; ratio – ratios; patio – patios; studio – studios.
- If the noun ends in *o* preceded by a *consonant,* the noun can take *es, s,* or either *s* or *es.*

es: potato – potatoes; hero – heroes; tomato – tomatoes; echo – echoes; veto – vetoes;

s: silo – silos; solo – solos; piano – pianos; soprano – sopranos; alto – altos; dynamo – dynamos;

either ***es*** or ***s:*** zero - zeros, zeroes; tornado - tornados, tornadoes; cargo - cargos, cargoes; motto -mottos, mottoes; domino - dominos, dominoes; buffalo bʌfələʊ - buffalos, buffaloes;

- Add *s* to most nouns ending in *f.* However, the *f* endings are

so irregular as to be nearly random. If you have any doubts at all, consult a dictionary: brief – briefs; chief – chiefs; proof – proofs; belief – beliefs; staff – staffs; sheriff – sheriffs; belief – beliefs;

Exception: In some cases, change the *f* or *fe* to *v* and add *es:* half – halves; knife – knives; leaf –leaves; life – lives; self – selves; thief – thieves; wife – wives; wolf – wolves;

Exception: This rule does not hold for names. In that case, just add an *s:* Mr. and Ms. *Wolf* becomes The *Wolfs.*

- Words that end in *-ey, -ay,* or *-oy* do not have *-ies* plurals:

-ey: valley – valleys; abbey – abbeys;

-ay: tray – trays; clay – clays;

-oy: ploy – ploys (something that is done or said in order to get an advantage, often dishonestly).

- In compound words, make the main word plural: mother-in-law - mothers-in-law; passer-by – passers-by;

Exceptions: If there is no noun in the compound word, add an *s* to the end of the word, as in *mix-ups, take-offs.* If the compound word ends in *-ful,* add an *s* to the end of the word, as in *capfuls.*

- Some nouns change their spelling when they become plural: child – children; foot – feet; goose – geese; louse – lice; man – men; mouse – mice; ox – oxen; tooth – teeth; woman women.
- Some nouns have the same form whether they are singular or plural: swine, series, deer, sheep, moose, species, Portuguese, means, aircraft
- The only plurals formed with apostrophes are the plurals of numbers, letters, and words highlighted as words: How many 3's make 9? There were too many *but's* in the speech.
- Some words from other languages form plurals in other ways, often determined by the grammar of their language of origin: alumnus - alumni (female); alumna - alumnae (male); analysis – analyses; axis – axes; bacterium – bacteria; basis – bases; crisis – crises; criterion - criteria ; hypothesis – hypotheses; index – index, indices; memorandum - memorandums, memoranda;

parenthesis – parentheses; phenomenon – phenomena; stimulus – stimuli; thesis – theses.

5. Errors in confusing word pairs (such as *weather/whether*)

Some words in English have the same spelling and pronunciation but different meanings, such as *bay/bay* and *beam/beam.* We also have words with the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings, such as *coarse/course* or *bridal/bridle.* Distinguishing between these confusing words is crucial because it helps you write exactly what you mean. Below are some of the most often misspelled words.

They're mangled because they're so close in sound and/or spelling. After you study the list, however, you'll be able to tell them apart and use them correctly.

- *air:* atmosphere: There's no *air* in a vacuum—hence his empty head.
- *err:* make a mistake: To *err* is human; to purr, feline.
- *a lot:* many: *A lot* of people are absent from work today.
- *allot:* divide: *Allot* the prizes equally among all guests, please.
- *all together:* all at one time: The students spoke *all together.*
- *altogether:* completely: The job is *altogether* complete.
- *allowed:* given permission: You are *allowed* to vote for the candidate of your choice.
- *aloud:* out loud, verbally: Don't say it *aloud.* Don't even think it quietly.
- *already:* previously: We had *already* packed.
- *all ready:* prepared: The cole slaw is *all ready* to serve (cold uncooked cabbage, carrot and onion, cut into long thin strips and covered in a thick creamy cold sauce).
- *altar:* shrine: The priest placed the prayer book on the *altar.*
- *alter:* change: She had to *alter* her dress.
- *arc:* curved line: The walls have an *arc* rather than a straight line.
- *ark:* boat: Noah loaded the *ark* with animals.
- *ascent:* to move up: She made a quick *ascent* up the corporate ladder!

- *assent:* to agree: I *assent* to your plan.
- *bare:* undressed: You can find a lot of *bare* people in nudist camps.
- *bare:* unadorned, plain: Just take the *bare* essentials when you go camping.
- *bear:* animal: Look at the *bear!*
- *bear:* carry, hold: I *bear* no grudges.
- *base:* the bottom part of an object, the plate in baseball, morally low: The vase has a wide, sturdy *base*. The catcher's wild throw missed the *base*. The criminal is *base* and corrupt.
- *bass:* the lowest male voice, a type of fish, a musical instrument: He sings *bass*. We caught a striped *bass*. She plays the *bass* in the orchestra.
- *beau:* sweetheart: My *beau* bought me flowers /bəʊ.
- *bow:* to bend from the waist, a device used to propel arrows, loops of ribbon, the forward end of a ship: The dancer liked to *bow* to his partner. We shoot deer with a *bow* and arrow. The baby wore a pretty hair *bow.* The passengers sat in the ship's *bow*.
- *board:* a slab of wood: The karate master cut the *board* with his bare hand.
- *board:* a group of directors: The school *board* meets the first Tuesday of every month.
- *bored:* not interested: The film bored us so we left early.
- *born:* native: *Born* free . . . taxed to death.
- *borne:* endured: Fortunato had *borne* his insults the best he could.
- *bore:* tiresome person: What a *bore* he is!
- *boar:* male pig: They found a *boar* in the woods.
- *brake:* a device for slowing a vehicle: Use the car *brake!*
- *break:* to crack or destroy: Don't *break* my back.
- *breadth:* measurement: The desk has a *breadth* of more than 6 feet.
- *breath:* inhale and exhale: She has bad *breath.*
- *capital:* the city or town that is the official seat of government, highly important, net worth of a business: Albany is the *capital*

of New York state. What a *capital* idea! The business has $12 million operating *capital*.

- *Capitol:* the building in Washington, D.C., where the U.S. Congress meets: The *Capitol* is a beautiful building.
- *conscience:* moral sense: Your *conscience* helps you distinguish right from wrong.
- *conscious:* awake: Being *conscious*: that annoying time between naps.
- *cheep:* what a bird says: "*Cheep,*" said the canary.
- *cheap:* not expensive: Talk is *cheap* because supply exceeds demand.
- *deer:* animal : The *deer* sneered at the inept hunter.
- *dear:* beloved: "You are my *dear,*" the man said to his wife.
- *draught, draft:* breeze: What's causing that *draft* on my neck?
- *draft:* sketch: A first *draft,* with no rewrites.

- ***Most Common Punctuation Errors***

1. Missing commas or extra commas

Incorrect: Avoid commas, that are not necessary.

Correct: Avoid commas that are not necessary.

2. Missing or misused apostrophes

Incorrect: Save the apostrophe for it's proper use and omit it where its' not needed.

Correct: Save the apostrophe for its proper use and omit it where it's not needed.

The apostrophe (') is used in three ways: to show possession (ownership), to show plural forms, and to show contractions (where a letter or number has been omitted). The following chart shows how *its, it's,* and *its'* are used:

Word	Part of Speech	Meaning
it's	Contraction	It is
its	Possessive pronoun	Belonging to it
its'	Is not a word	None

3. Misused exclamation marks

Incorrect: Of all U.S. presidents, none lived to be older than John Adams, who died at the age of 91!

Correct: Of all U.S. presidents, none lived to be older than John Adams, who died at the age of 91.

Never overuse exclamation marks. Instead of using exclamation marks, convey emphasis through careful, vivid word choice. Exclamation marks create an overwrought tone that often undercuts your point.

4. Misused semicolons

Incorrect: Use the semicolon correctly always use it where it is appropriate; and never where it is not suitable.

Correct: Use the semicolon correctly; always use it where it is appropriate, and never where it is not suitable.

A semicolon has two primary uses: to separate two complete sentences ("independent clauses") whose ideas are closely related or to separate clauses that contain a comma.

- ***Most Common Capitalization Errors***

1. Proper nouns not capitalized.

Incorrect: louisa adams, Wife of john quincy Adams, was the first (and only) foreignborn First Lady.

Correct: Louisa Adams, wife of John Quincy Adams, was the first (and only) foreignborn first lady.

Here are the basic rules of capitalization:

- *Capitalize all proper nouns.* These include names, geographical places, specific historical events, eras, and documents, languages, nationalities, countries, and races.
- *Capitalize names of the days of the week and names of months.*
- *Capitalize the first word at the beginning of a sentence.*

2. Errors in titles

Incorrect: *The Wind In The Willows*

Correct: *The Wind in the Willows*

Capitalize the major words in titles of books, plays, films, newspapers, and magazines.

- Do not capitalize the articles: *a, an, the.*
- Do not capitalize prepositions: *at, by, for, of, in, up, on, so, on, to,* etc.
- Do not capitalize conjunctions: *and, as, but, if, or, nor.*

- ***Improve Your Writing, One Step at a Time***

How can the previous guidelines be used to improve the writing? Try these ideas:

1. Don't try to master all the rules of grammar and usage at once; it's both futile and frustrating.

2. Instead, listen to the comments your readers mention when they discuss your writing.

3. Keep track of the writing errors you make by checking your own work against the guidelines. Review this checklist every time you write an important document. To isolate your most common writing errors, select several pieces of your writing, such as memos, letters, or reports.

- Read the documents you selected for analysis several times.
- Circle all the errors you find. Do not panic if you can't identify each type of error at this point. Just do the best you can.
- Ask a friend or family member to read the documents and find additional errors.
- Count the number of errors in each category.
- Reread the material that explains your specific writing problems.
- Concentrate on these areas as you write.

4. Be patient. Learning the rules takes both time and effort. Remember that using standard grammar with confidence will help you build the credible image you want—and need.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Select the word that best completes each sentence

1. We add *-s* or *-es* to make the third-person *singular* form of most (nouns, verbs) but add *-s* or *es* to make the *plural* form of most (nouns, verbs).

2. (Redundancy, Metaphors) are figures of speech that compare two unlike things to explain the less-familiar object.

3. (A modifier, An idiom) is a word or phrase that describes a subject, verb, or object.

4. A (misplaced modifier, dangling construction) is a phrase, clause, or word placed too far from the noun or pronoun it describes. As a result, the sentence fails to convey your exact meaning.

5. The word (baggy, sacrifice, exhaust, vegetable) is misspelled.

6. Because of errors in pronunciation, spellers often insert an unnecessary (modifier, vowel) between two letters.

7. (Their, There, They're) is a possessive word.

8. The (apostrophe, comma) is used to show possession and to show plural forms.

9. This mark of punctuation also shows (contraction, parallelism) where a letter or number has been omitted.

10. (Quotation marks, Exclamation marks) create an overwrought tone that often undercuts your point.

Exercise 2. Multiple-Choice Questions

Choose the best answer to each question.

1. The following are all classified as errors in mechanics *except*

(a) Biased language

(b) Missing or misused apostrophes

(c) Missing commas or extra commas

(d) Misused exclamation marks

2. Which is a run-on sentence?

(a) Harry Truman's middle name was just S, but it isn't short for anything.

(b) Harry Truman's middle name was just S, it isn't short for anything.

(c) Harry Truman's middle name was just S; it isn't short for anything.

(d) Harry Truman's middle name was just S, and it isn't short for anything.

3. Which is the best revision of the following sentence fragment:

Since Lincoln Logs were invented by Frank Lloyd Wright's son.

(a) Because Lincoln Logs were invented by Frank Lloyd Wright's son.

(b) When Lincoln Logs were invented by Frank Lloyd Wright's son.

(c) After Lincoln Logs were invented by Frank Lloyd Wright's son.

(d) Lincoln Logs were invented by Frank Lloyd Wright's son.

4. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

(a) Madison lived at Montpelier (tall mountain), Thomas Jefferson lived at Monticello (little mountain).

(b) Madison, lived at Montpelier (tall mountain), Thomas Jefferson, lived at Monticello (little mountain).

(c) Madison lived at Montpelier (tall mountain) Thomas Jefferson lived at Monticello (little mountain).

(d) Madison lived at Montpelier (tall mountain); Thomas Jefferson lived at Monticello (little mountain).

5. Which sentence has a dangling modifier?

(a) Coming up the hall, the clock struck ten.

(b) As we came up the hall, the clock struck ten.

(c) The clock struck ten when we came up the hall.

(d) We heard the clock strike ten as we came up the hall.

6. Which sentence has a misplaced modifier?

(a) Yesterday, the city police reported that two cars were stolen.

(b) Two cars were reported stolen by the city police yesterday.

(c) The city police reported yesterday that two cars were stolen.

(d) The city police reported that two cars were stolen yesterday.

7. Which sentence is not parallel?

(a) My date was obnoxious, loud, and cheap.

(b) My date was obnoxious, loud, and tight-fisted.

(c) My date was obnoxious, loud, and didn't spend money easily.

(d) My date was obnoxious, loud, and economical.

8. Every sentence must have all the following elements *except:*

(a) A subject, a noun or pronoun

(b) A modifier, an adjective or an adverb

(c) A verb

(d) A complete thought

Exercise 3. Revise the following sentences to eliminate any dangling modifiers. Each sentence has more than one possible answer.

1. After accomplishing many deeds of valour, Andrew Jackson's fame led to his election to the presidency in 1828 and 1832.

2. By the age of fourteen, both of Jackson's parents had died.

3. To aid the American Revolution, service as a mounted courier was chosen by Jackson.

4. Though not well educated, a successful career as a lawyer and judge proved Jackson's ability.

5. Winning many military battles, the American public believed in Jackson's leadership.

Exercise 4. In the following pairs, one sentence is correct; and the other sentence has a misplaced or a dangling modifier. Mark the correct sentence.

1. A_____ Looking towards the south, a funnel-shaped cloud stirred up the dust.

B_____ Looking towards the south, I saw a funnel-shaped cloud stir up the dust.

2. A_____ They saw a fence made of barbed wire behind the house.

B_____ They saw a fence behind the house made of barbed wire.

3. A_____ After following the vision program for two weeks, my doctor told me that my eyesight had improved.

B_____ After I had followed the vision program for two weeks, my doctor told me that my eyesight had improved.

4. A_____ We saw several birds looking out our window.

B_____ Looking out our window, we saw several birds.

5. A_____ The four men eating lunch talked quietly in the corner.

B_____ The four men talked quietly in the corner eating lunch.

6. A_____ Racing across the parking lot, the bus was reached before the door closed.

B_____ Racing across the parking lot, I reached the bus before the door closed

7. A_____ Being only five, the doctor did not know how to operate on me.

B_____ Because I was only five, the doctor did not know how to operate on me.

8. A_____ Mary nearly watched two hundred films last year.

B_____ Mary watched nearly two hundred films last year.

9. A_____ To enter the contest, you must send an entry form with your slogan.

B_____ To enter the contest, an entry form must be sent with your slogan.

10. A_____ I remember seeing the picture of the fire-fighter who had been injured on the morning news.

B_____ I remember seeing on the morning news the picture of the fire-fighter who had been injured.

Exercise 5. Correct all the errors in the following paragraph.

Sherlock holmes and watson camping in the forest. They gone to bed and were laying beneath the night sky. Holmes' said Whatson look up what do you see"

"I see thosands of stars."

"And what do that means to you? Holmes ask?

"I suppose it mean that of all the planets, in the universe, we are truly fortunate to be here on Earth. We are small in Gods eyes should struggle every day to be worthy of our blessings. In a meteorological sense it mean, well have a sunny day tomorow. What does it mean to you Holmes"

"To me it, means someone have stole our tent"

Phrases and Clauses

- *Sentences, Phrases and Clauses*
- *Overview of Phrases*
- *Overview of Clauses*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Pick out which of these examples are clauses and which are phrases:

a) in a heated manner
b) they were arguing in a heated manner
c) the presentation of the new product
d) the team leader is giving the same presentation again
e) the report consulted
f) the managers consulted the annual report
g) will leave soon
h) leave soon

• *Sentences, Phrases and Clauses*

A sentence is a group of words that makes complete sense, contains a main verb, and begins with a capital letter. A simple sentence normally contains one statement. A compound sentence contains two or more clauses of equal status (or main clauses), which are normally joined by a conjunction such as *and* or *but*. A complex sentence is also made up of clauses, but in this case, the clauses are not equally balanced. They contain a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Phrases and clauses are groups of related words that serve as building blocks of sentences on a larger scale than parts of speech. A phrase is a collection of words that may have nouns or verbals, but it does not have a subject doing a verb. The following are examples of phrases: *leaving behind the dog, smashing into a fence, before the first test, after the devastation.* A phrase functions as one part of speech.

A clause is a collection of words that has a subject that is actively doing a verb. The following are examples of clauses: *since she laughs at diffident men; I despise individuals of low character.*

A clause is a functional word group that does contain a subject and a finite verb; it is always part of a sentence. There are two basic clauses—independent and dependent. An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. In fact a simple sentence like *We saw you coming* is an independent clause. But usually the term is reserved for such a construction when it occurs as part of a larger sentence. The sentence below, for instance, consists of two independent clauses:

We saw you coming, and we were glad.

A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a grammatically complete sentence. It serves as part of a sentence—a subject, object, adjective, or adverb. If we were to place *when* before the opening clause in the example above, we would turn it into a dependent (adverbial) clause modifying the second clause (which remains independent):

When we saw you coming, we were glad.

Dependent clauses may also act as nouns, either as subjects (as in the first of the following sentences) or as objects (as in the second):

Why he went at all is a mystery to me.

A clause contains both a subject and a verb whereas a phrase does not. Understanding phrases and clauses and knowing how to recognize them help writers create varied sentences and avoid problems such as run-on sentences, fragments, and punctuation errors.

- ***Overview of Phrases***

A *phrase* is a group of words that functions in a sentence as a single part of speech. A phrase does not have a subject or a verb, so it cannot stand alone as an independent unit—it can function only as a part of speech. Phrases are used to add detail by describing. Phrases help you express yourself more clearly.

Type of Phrase	Definition	Examples
Prepositional	Begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun	*near the house* *over the moon* *under the desk*
Noun	Phrase that functions as a noun	*A Georgia woman* was jailed briefly after a run-in.
Adjective	Phrase that functions as an adjective	Marci has a scarf *with green stripes.*
Adverb	Prepositional phrase that functions as an adverb	The fans shouted *with hoarse voices*.
Appositive	Noun or pronoun that renames another noun or pronoun	Fran, *a maths teacher,* enjoys summer vacation.
Verb	Verb form used as another part of speech	See Participle, Gerund, Infinitive.
Participle	Verbal phrase that functions as an adjective	*Screaming loudly,* the baby was disconsolate.
Gerund	Verbal phrase that functions as a noun	*Working overtime* requires great sacrifice.
Infinitive	Verbal phrase that functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb	*To clean house on a spring day* is depressing.

Prepositional Phrases

A *prepositional phrase* is a group of words that begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or a pronoun. This noun or pronoun is called the "object of the preposition": *by the wall, near the closet, over the garage, with help, in the desert, below sea level.* A prepositional phrase can function as an adjective, adverb, or even as a noun. The chief function of prepositional phrases is to modify, either as adjectives or as adverbs.

E.g.: A boy *on the roof* is singing a song. (As adjective)
The man *in the room* is our teacher. (As adjective)
She is shouting *in a loud voice***.** (As adverb)

He always behaves *in a good manner***.** (As adverb)

Noun phrases

Noun phrases name a person, place, thing, or idea. A noun phrase consists of a noun and all of its modifiers, which can include other phrases (like the prepositional phrase *in the park*). A noun phrase consists of a noun as the headword and other words (usually modifiers and determiners) which come after or before the noun. The whole phrase works as a noun in a sentence.

*E.g.***:** He is wearing *a nice red shirt.* (as noun/object)
She brought *a glass full of water.* (as noun/object)
The boy with brown hair is laughing. (as noun/subject)
A man on the roof was shouting. (as noun/subject)

Adjective phrases

An adjective phrase is a group of words that functions like an adjective in a sentence. It consists of adjectives, modifier and any word that modifies a noun or pronoun. An adjective phrase functions like an adjective to modify (or tell about) a noun or a pronoun in a sentence.

E.g.: He is wearing *a nice red* shirt. (modifies shirt)
The girl *with brown hair* is singing a song. (modifies girl)
He gave me a glass *full of water***.** (modifies glass)
A boy *from America* won the race. (modifies boy)

Prepositional phrases and participle phrases also function as adjectives so we can also call them adjective phrases when they function as adjective. In the above sentence "The girl with brown hair is singing a song", the phrase "with brown hair" is a prepositional phrase but it functions as an adjective.

Adverb phrases

An adverb phrase is a group of words that functions as an adverb in a sentence. It consists of adverbs or other words (preposition, noun, verb, modifiers) that make a group with works like an adverb in a sentence.

An adverb phrase functions like an adverb to modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb.

E.g.: He always behaves *in a good manner***.** (modifies verb behave)
They were shouting *in a loud voice***.** (modifies verb shout)

She always drives *with care***.** (modifies verb drive)

He sat *in a corner of the room.* (modifies verb sit)

He returned *in a short while***.** (modifies verb return)

A prepositional phrase can also act as an adverb phrase. For example in above sentence "He always behaves in a good manner", the phrase "in a good manner" is a prepositional phrase but it acts as adverb phrase here.

Appositives and Appositive Phrases

An *appositive* is a noun or a pronoun that renames another noun or pronoun. Appositives are placed directly after the nouns or pronouns they identify. *Appositive phrases* are nouns or pronouns with modifiers.

E.g.: Lisa, *a friend,* should have understood my fear.

The appositive "a friend" renames the noun *Lisa.*

E.g.: Tom's new car, *a PT Cruiser,* ran out of gas on the highway.

The appositive "a PT Cruiser" renames the noun *car.*

E.g.: Lisa, *a dear old friend,* should have understood my fear.

The appositive phrase "a dear old friend" renames the noun *Lisa.*

*E.g.***:** Tom's new car, *a cherry red convertible PT Cruiser,* ran out of gas on the highway.

The appositive phrase "a cherry red convertible PT Cruiser" renames the noun *car.*

Verb Phrases

A *verbal* is a verb form used as another part of speech. Verbals come in three varieties: *participles, gerunds,* and *infinitives.* Each type has a different function in a sentence:

- *Participles* function as adjectives.
- *Gerunds* function as nouns.
- *Infinitives* function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

Although a verbal does not function as a verb in a sentence, it does retain two qualities of a verb:

- A verbal can be described by adverbs and adverbial phrases.
- A verbal can add modifiers to become a *verbal phrase.*

1. Participle phrases

A *participle* is a form of a verb that functions as an adjective. There are two kinds of participles: *present participles* and *past participles*.

- Present participles end in *-ing* (jumping, burning, speaking).
- Past participles usually end in *-ed, -t,* or *-en* (jumped, burnt, spoken).

E.g.: The *wailing cats* disturbed the neighbours.

The present participle "wailing" describes the noun *cats.*

E.g.: Annoyed, the *customer* stalked out of the store.

The past participle "annoyed" describes the noun *customer.*

Participle phrases contain a participle modified by an adverb or an adverbial phrase. A participle phrase can be placed before or after the word it describes. A participial phrase has a past or present participle as its head. Participial phrases always function as adjectives.

E.g.: Walking carefully, I avoided the spilled juice.

The participle phrase "walking carefully" describes the pronoun *I.*

E.g.: Nina, bothered by the mess, cleaned it up.

The participle phrase "bothered by the mess" describes the noun *Nina.*

2. Gerund phrases

A *gerund* is a form of a verb used as a noun. *Gerunds* can function as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, objects of a preposition, predicate nominative, and appositives.

- Gerunds always end in *-ing.*
- Gerunds always act as nouns.

E.g.: In adult education, the Kitters discovered *dancing.*

The gerund "dancing" is a direct object.

Like a participle, a gerund can be part of a phrase. A gerund phrase is just a noun phrase with a gerund as its head.

E.g.: The *slow, steady dripping* annoyed him.

The gerund phrase is "the slow, steady dripping."

E.g.: Jill's morning schedule includes *exercising for a full hour.*

The gerund phrase is "exercising for a full hour."

3.Infinitive Phrases

The *infinitive* is a form of the verb that comes after the word *to* and acts as a noun, adjective, or adverb. An infinitive phrase contains

modifiers that together act as a single part of speech. An infinitive phrase is a noun phrase with an infinitive as its head. Unlike the other noun phrases, however, an infinitive phrase can also function as an adjective or an adverb.

E.g.: His goal, *to get promoted before age 30,* did not seem realistic.

The infinitive phrase "to get promoted before age 30" modifies the noun *goal.*

E.g.: The honourees did not want *to attend the banquet in the evening.*

The infinitive phrase is "to attend the banquet in the evening."

Absolute Phrases

Absolute phrase (also called nominative phrase) is a group of words including a noun or pronoun and a participle as well as any associated modifiers. Absolute phrase modifies (give information about) the entire sentence. It resembles a clause but it lack a true finite verb. It is separated by a comma or pairs of commas from the rest sentence.

E.g.: He looks sad, *his face expressing worry.*

She was waiting for her friend, *her eyes on the clock.*

John is painting a wall, *his shirt dirty with paint.*

- ***Overview of Clauses***

A *clause* is a group of words with its own subject and verb. Like phrases, clauses enrich the written and oral expression by adding details and making the meaning more exact. Clauses also allow the writer to combine ideas to show their relationship. This adds logic and cohesion to the speech and writing.

There are two types of clauses: *independent clauses* (main clauses) and *dependent clauses* (subordinate clauses and relative clauses). An *independent clause* is a complete sentence because it has a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. A *dependent* (*subordinate*) *clause* is part of a sentence, so it cannot stand alone.

Dependent Clauses

Dependent clauses add additional information to the main clauses,

but they are not necessary to complete the thought. Although each of the dependent clauses has a subject and a verb, it does not express a complete thought. As a result, it cannot stand alone.

A dependent clause often starts with a word that makes the clause unable to stand alone. These words are *subordinating conjunctions.* You cannot determine whether a clause is independent or dependent from its length. Either type of clause can be very long or very short—or somewhere in between. Skilled writers often vary the length of their clauses to achieve rhythm, balance, and meaning in their writing.

Subordinating conjunctions link an independent clause to a dependent clause. Each subordinating conjunction expresses a relationship between the dependent clause and the independent clause. For example, some conjunctions show time order, while others show result or effect. The following chart lists the subordinating conjunctions used most often and the relationships they express:

Subordinating Conjunctions	Relationship
unless, provided that, if, even if	Condition
because, as, as if	Reason
rather than, than, whether	Choice
though, although, even though, but	Contrast
where, wherever	Location
in order that, so, so that, that	Result, effect
while, once, when, since, as whenever, after, before, until, as soon	Time

When a dependent clause introduced by a subordinating conjunction comes **before** the independent clause, the clauses are usually separated by a comma:

E.g.: When you are in Greece, you should visit the Parthenon. (before)

You should visit the Parthenon when you are in Greece. (after)

There are three different kinds of subordinate clauses: *adverb clauses, adjective clauses,* and *noun clauses.*

1. Adverb clause

An *adverb clause* is a dependent clause that describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb. It modifies(describes) the situation in main clause in terms of "time, frequency (how often), cause and effect, contrast, condition, intensity (to what extent)." An adverb clause can be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence.

The subordinating conjunctions used for adverb clauses are as follows.

*Time***:** when, whenever, since, until, before, after, while, as, by the time, as soon as;

*Cause and effect***:** because, since, now that, as long as, so, so that;

*Contrast***:** although, even, whereas, while, though;

*Condition***:** if, unless, only if, whether or not, even if, providing or provided that, in case.

*Examples***:** Don't go before he comes.

He takes medicine because he is ill.

Unless you study for the test, you can't pass it.

2. Adjective clauses

An adjective clause is a dependent clause that describes nouns and pronouns. As with adjectives, an adjective clause answers these questions: *What kind? Which one? How many? How much*? Most adjective clauses start with the pronouns *who, whom, why, whose, which, that, when, where.* An adjective clause always follows the noun it modifies.

E.g.: The traffic is never light on the *days when I'm in a hurry.* The adjective clause "when I'm in a hurry" describes the noun *days.*

E.g.: We selected the *candidates* who were best qualified for the job. The adjective clause "who were best qualified for the job" describes the noun *candidates.*

Relative clauses

Adjective clauses that begin with one of the relative pronouns are called *relative clauses.* The relative pronouns are: *who, whom, whose, which, that.* Relative pronouns connect an adjective clause to the word the clause describes.

E.g.: Ms Harris, whose son is an athlete, is used to having their

home filled with sporting equipment. The relative clause "whose son is an athlete" describes the noun *Ms. Harris.*

E.g.: The person *of whom you spoke* is my cousin. The relative clause "of whom you spoke" describes the noun *person*.

There are two types of relative clauses – defining (identifying, restrictive) and non-defining (non-identifying, non-restrictive) clauses.

Defining Clause – *"The building that they built in San Francisco sold for a lot of money."* A defining clause begins with a relative pronoun like *which/ that* or *who/that*. It specifies or defines the noun; in this case, it specifies which building the speaker is referring to. The relative pronoun is often omitted *("The building (that) they built"),* when it is not the subject of the clause.

Non-defining Clause – *"That eight-floor building, which they built in San Francisco, sold for a lot of money."* A non-defining clause begins with a relative pronoun like *which* or *who,* never *that.* It adds extra information about an already-specific noun; in this case, there is only one eight-floor building to talk about. A comma is always used before and after a non-defining clause if it is within a main clause.

E.g. That table, *which costs $ 100*, is made of steel.

3. Noun clauses

A noun clause is a dependent clause that functions as a noun. A noun clause can replace any noun in a sentence, functioning as a subject, object, or complement.

E.g.: Tracey does *whatever her parents ask her to do.* The noun clause is "whatever her parents ask her to do."

E.g.: The teacher did not accept my excuse *that the dog ate my homework.* The noun clause is "that the dog ate my homework."

A noun clause starts with words *"that, what, whatever, who, whom, whoever, whomever"*.

E.g. Whatever you learn will help you in future. (noun clause as a subject)

What you said made me laugh. (noun clause as a subject)

He knows *that he will pass the test.* (noun clause as an object)

Now I realize *what he would have thought.* (noun clause as an object)

Exercises

Exercise 1. Are the following statements true or false?

1. A *phrase* is a group of words that functions in a sentence as a single part of speech.

2. A phrase has a subject and a verb, so it can stand alone as an independent unit.

3. A *prepositional phrase* is a group of words that begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or a pronoun.

4. The italic portion of the following sentence is a prepositional phrase: Frisky, *my loyal Irish setter,* can always sense when I'm upset.

5. An *adjectival phrase* describes a noun or a pronoun.

6. To find out if a prepositional phrase serves as an adjectival phrase, see if it answers these questions: "In what manner?" or "To what extent?"

7. The italic portion of the following sentence is functioning as an adjective phrase: The fireworks continued *late into the night.*

8. *Adverbial phrases* describe a verb, an adjective, or adverb.

9. The italic portion of the following sentence is functioning as an adverbial phrase: The Little League team competed *in the local arena.*

10. A *clause* is a noun or a pronoun that renames another noun or pronoun.

11. A *verbal* is a verb form used as another part of speech.

12. Verbals are the same as appositives.

13. *Participles* function as adjectives.

14. *Infinitives* function as nouns.

15. *Gerunds* function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.

16. Present participles always end in *-ing* (kissing, leaping, moaning).

17. Past participles often end in *-ed, -t,* or *-en* as in *smoked* and *burnt*.

18. Gerunds always end in *-ing* and function as verbs.

19. The italic phrase in the following sentence is an infinitive: Why

did the chicken cross the road? To Ernest Hemingway: *To die*. In the rain.

20. The italic portion of the following sentence is functioning as an adjectival clause: I met a woman *who works with your uncle.*

Exercise 2. Select the word that best completes each sentence.

1. A *clause* is a group of words with its own subject and (relative pronoun, verb).

2. There are two types of clauses: independent clauses and (verbal clauses, dependent clauses).

3. Independent clauses are also called (main clauses, relative clauses).

4. (Adjectival, Subordinating) conjunctions link an independent clause to a dependent clause.

5. The conjunction *unless* shows (time, condition).

6. The conjunction *although* shows (contrast, result).

7. Dependent clauses are the same as (infinitives, subordinate clauses).

8. All dependent clauses are (subordinate clauses, complete sentences).

9. When a dependent clause introduced by a subordinating conjunction comes before the independent clause, the clauses are usually separated by a (comma, colon).

10. As with adverbs, an adverb clause answers these questions: Where? Why? When? (In what manner? What kind?).

Exercise 3. For the following passage, identify the independent clauses and dependent clauses.

Joe was always hard up, always hustling to make a buck. Over the years, he had learned how to do almost any job. He knew everything about building houses; he knew how to mix mud and straw just right to make strong adobes that would not crumble. Though unlicensed, he could steal and lay his own plumbing, do all the electric fixtures in a house, and hire five peons at slave wages to install a septic tank that would not overflow until the day after Joe died or left town. Given

half the necessary equipment, he could dig a well, and he understood everything there was to understand about pumps. He could tear down a useless tractor and piece it together again so niftily it would plough like balls of fire for at least a week before blowing up and maiming its driver; and he could disk and seed a field well and irrigate it properly. "Hell," Joe liked to brag, "I can grow sweet corn just by using my own spit and a little ant piss!"

Exercise 4. Identify whether the underlined part is a phrase or a clause

1. When Barry was transferred to Kansas City, his company helped his wife to find a job there.
2. A hovercraft crosses a body of water on a cushion of air blown through jets in the underside of its hull.
3. The floor plan of the new house includes one room labelled as an atrium and another called a mud room.
4. The man gave the exam another shot after he failed to pass it the first time.
5. After knocking over the vase, the burglar decided it was time to run

Exercise 5. Identify the type of the underlined phrase:

1. Most of the time, swimming at the beach is safe.
2. They wanted to leave the country as fast as possible.
3. Marion always enjoys smiling at the camera.
4. The bird, a beautiful yellow grosbeak, is chirping gleefully.
5. Upon my arrival, I was whisked into a secret chamber.
6. Their marriage broke up in the most painful way.
7. We decided to move to New York for better or worse.
8. The players responded surprisingly well to all the pressures of the playoffs.
9. The only white people who came to our house were welfare workers and bill collectors.
10. The city plans to open several new buildings connected by walkways.

11. I wish all people could live with music in their hearts.
12. We will need a week to finish that work.
13. The tree on your left is a popular haven for such species
14. I longed to live near the sea.
15. We were frightened by the bug crawling around on the concrete.
16. To run five miles is hard exercise.
17. The dog was hiding under the kitchen table.

Writing Correct and Complete Sentences

- *What Is a Sentence?*
- *The Four Sentence Functions*
- *The Basic Types of Grammatical Sentences*
- *Choosing Sentence Types*
- *Sentence Errors: Run-on (fused) Sentences and Comma Splices*
- *Sentence Errors: Fragments*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Identify whether the following sentences are simple, compound, complex or compound-complex:

1. Resistance to antibiotics is a worldwide problem, but medical experts list ways to help slow resistance and keep current drugs effective.

2. When you go to the doctor with a cold or the flu, don't automatically ask for antibiotics.

3. Colds and flu are caused by viruses, and antibiotics don't work to fight them, so you should discuss other remedies with your doctor.

4. If the doctor prescribes antibiotics, follow directions and take all of the medicine.

5. Not taking the medicine as prescribed could allow the infection to re-establish itself in your body and become more resistant to the drugs later.

6. Taking more than one antibiotic at once or taking left over antibiotics in your medicine cabinet may increase the chance of resistance.

7. Keep current with your vaccinations; this can prevent you from getting infectious diseases and needing the antibiotics.

8. Remember to practice personal cleanliness as simple hand washing and proper food handling can help protect you from infectious diseases.

9. Improper use of antibiotics helps develop drug resistance, so many medicines that were strongly effective a few decades ago don't work at all in the present.

10. When bacteria is resistant to antibiotics, the only option may be to remove the infection with surgery.

- ***What Is a Sentence?***

Sentence: Wait! (*You* is understood but unstated).

Sentence: You wait!

Sentence: Please, wait right now, before you go any further.

Each of these three word groups is a sentence because they each meet the three requirements for a sentence. To be a sentence, a group of words must

- Have a *subject* (noun or pronoun),
- Have a *predicate* (verb or verb phrase),
- Express a *complete thought.*

A *sentence* has two parts: a *subject* and a *predicate.* The *subject* includes the noun or pronoun that tells what the subject is about. The *predicate* includes the verb that describes what the subject is doing.

Therefore, a sentence is a group of words with two main parts: a subject area and a predicate area. Together, the subject and predicate express a complete thought. Being able to recognize the subject and the verb in a sentence will help to make sure that one's own sentences are complete and clear. To check that the subject and verb are included in the sentences, these steps will be followed:

- To find the subject, ask the question, "What word is the sentence describing?"
- To find an action verb, ask the question, "What did the subject do?"
- If you an action verb cannot be found, a linking verb should be looked for.

- ***The Four Sentence Functions***

In addition to classifying sentences by the number of clauses they contain, we can classify sentences according to their function. There are four sentence functions in English: *declarative, exclamatory, interrogative,* and *imperative.*

1. Declarative sentences state an idea. They end with a full stop. Formal essays or reports are composed almost entirely of declarative sentence:

E.g.: The concert begins in two hours.

July 4th is Independence Day.

Crickets are packed with calcium, a mineral crucial for bone growth.

Termites and caterpillars are a rich source of iron.

2. Exclamatory sentences show strong emotions. They end with an exclamation mark. Exclamatory sentences portray emotion but care should be taken to use them sparingly. Otherwise, the writing will lack sincerity.

E.g.: I can't believe you left the car at the station overnight!

What a mess you made in the kitchen!

I can't wait for the party!

I don't know what I'll do if I don't pass this test!

3. Interrogative sentences ask a question. They end with a question mark.

E.g.: Who would eat bugs?

Where did you put the eraser?

Would you please help me with this package?

What do you call this dish?

4. Imperative sentences issue commands or requests or they can express a desire or wish. They are punctuated with a simple full stop or they can be exclamations requiring an exclamation mark. It all depends on the strength of emotion they are intended to express. Imperative sentences often omit the subject, as in a command.

E.g.: Take this route to save 5 miles.

Meet me at the town square.

Drop what you're doing and come celebrate with us!
Fasten your seatbelts when the sign is illuminated.

- ***The Basic Types of Grammatical Sentences***

There are four basic types of sentences: *simple, compound, complex, compound-complex.* By learning these types, writers can add complexity and variation to their sentences.

1. Simple sentences

A *simple sentence* has one subject and one verb—although either or both can be compound. In addition, a simple sentence can have adjectives and adverbs. What a simple sentence cannot have is another independent clause or any subordinate clauses.

E.g.: The *snow melted* quickly in the bright sunshine (subject verb).

Oprah Winfrey and *Conan O'Brien host* talk shows (subject subject verb).

Both the *students* and the *teachers cheered* and *clapped* for the winning team (subject subject verb verb).

Just because a simple sentence seems "simple" does not mean that it is not powerful. Today's reader tends to favour simple sentences—clear and direct writing rather than flowery, convoluted prose. It is a busy world full of information, and simple, easy-to-read sentences with powerful verbs are appealing. Sentence length can have an enormous effect on the readers. Martin Cutts, in *Oxford Guide to Plain English*, puts it well: **"***More people fear snakes than full stops, so they recoil when a long sentence comes hissing across the page***."**

For instance, Noble Prize-winning author Ernest Hemingway created a powerful style using mainly simple sentences. In the following excerpt from his book *A Farewell to Arms,* Hemingway uses the simple sentence to convey powerful emotions. The simple sentences are in italic:

My knee wasn't there. My hand went in and my knee was down to my shin. *Passini was dead. That left three.* Someone took hold of me under the arms and someone else lifted up my legs.

"There are three others," I said. "One is dead."

"*It's Manera.* We went for a stretcher but there wasn't any. *How are you, Tenente?*"

"Where are Gordini and Gavuzzi?"

"Gordini's at the post getting bandaged. Gavuzzi has your legs. Hold on to my neck, Tenente. Are you badly hit?"

Another example of effectively using short, powerful sentences to create an impact can be found in *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan:

That night I sat on Tyan-yu's bed and waited for him to touch me. But he didn't. I was relieved.

The paragraph gets the point across powerfully and concisely and without filler.

In written work, simple sentences can be very effective for grabbing a reader's attention or for summing up an argument, but they have to be used with care: too many simple sentences can make your writing seem childish. Transitional phrases are used to connect simple sentences to the surrounding sentences.

2. Compound sentences

A *compound sentence* has two or more independent clauses. The independent clauses can be joined in one of two ways:

- With a coordinating conjunction: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*
- With a semicolon (;)

As with a simple sentence, a compound sentence cannot have any subordinate clauses.

Insect cuisine may not be standard food in the United States, *indep. clause*	but *conj.*	*Science World* notes that 80 percent of the world's population savours bugs. *indep. clause*
Grasshoppers are the most commonly consumed insect, *indep. clause*	yet *conj.*	wasps have the highest protein of all edible insects. *indep. clause*
The car is unreliable *indep. clause*	; *semicolon*	it never starts in the rain. *indep. clause*

A conjunctive adverb is also used to join the independent clauses. The following words are conjunctive adverbs: *accordingly, again, also, besides, consequently, finally, for example, for instance, furthermore, however, indeed, moreover, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, then, therefore, though, thus.* The sentence construction looks like this: *independent clause; conjunctive adverb, independent clause*

Grasshoppers eat clean plants; *indep. clause*	however, *conj. adv.*	lobsters eat foul materials. *indep. clause*
Nico worked hard; *indep. clause*	therefore *conj. adv.*	she got a merit raise. *indep. clause*

Punctuation patterns are as follows:

A. Independent clause, coordinating conjunction independent clause.

B. Independent clause; conjunctive adverb, independent clause.

C. Independent clause; independent clause.

A compound sentence is most effective when is used to create a sense of balance or contrast between two (or more) equally-important pieces of information.

This paragraph, from *A Farewell to Arms*, shows the writer's skill with compound sentences, giving the reader a sense of the character's languor - pleasant mental or physical tiredness or lack of activity:

They left me alone and I lay in bed and read the papers awhile, the news from the front, and the list of dead officers with their decorations and then reached down and brought up the bottle of Cinzano and held it straight up on my stomach, the cool glass against my stomach, and took little drinks making rings on my stomach from holding the bottle there between drinks, and watched it get dark outside over the roofs of the town.

3. Complex sentences

A *complex sentence* contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. The independent clause is called the *main clause.*

These sentences use *subordinating conjunctions* to link ideas. The subordinating conjunctions include such words as: *because, as, as if, unless, provided that, if, even if.* A complete list of subordinating conjunctions was provided in *Phrases and Clauses.*

E.g.: Since insects don't have much muscle, their texture is similar to that of a clam (dep. clause, indep. clause).

No one answered when he called the house (indep. clause, dep. clause).

It was no secret that he was very lazy (indep. clause, dep. clause).

A complex sentence is very different from a simple sentence or a compound sentence because it makes clear which ideas are most important. If the dependent clause is introductory, a comma is put at the end of the dependent clause (subordinate clause).

E.g. After we ate lunch, we felt too lazy to mow the yard.

If the dependent clause comes at the end of the sentence, a comma is not needed unless the dependent clause begins with a contrast word such as *although, though, even though*, or *whereas*.

E.g. The teacher returned the homework after she noticed the error.

His jury duty was scheduled for the next day, although he gave no further indication of concern since Martha's bones were occupying his interest.

If the dependent clause comes in the middle of a sentence, commas are placed around the clause if the clause is non-defining.

4. Compound-complex sentences

A *compound-complex sentence* has at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause. The dependent clause can be part of the independent clause.

E.g.: When the drought comes, the reservoirs dry up, and residents know that water restrictions will be in effect (dep. clause, indep. clause, indep. clause).

Chris wanted to drive to work, but she couldn't until her car was repaired (indep. clause, indep. clause, dep. clause).

- ***Choosing Sentence Types***

So, there are four different types of sentences to use as ideas are crafted into language: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. Which ones should one use? When writing, we may first look at the subject primarily from our own point of view— "What am I writing about?" However, as we size up the situation, we should begin to ask: "Who is my audience?" "What purpose do I hope to achieve?" "What will I need to say in order to accomplish this purpose?" "In what form or genre will I be presenting my ideas?"

Should we write mainly simple sentences, as Ernest Hemingway did? Or should complex sentences be used, which were favoured by Charles Dickens and William Faulkner. The Big Three—*purpose, audience,* and *subject*— should be considered as sentences are created:

- *Purpose.*

Purpose is the reason or reasons why a person composes a particular piece of writing. Focusing on purpose as one writes helps a person to know what form of writing to choose, how to focus and organize the writing, what kinds of evidence to cite, how formal or informal the writing style should be, and how much should be written. The eleven different types of purpose include the following:

1. to express;
2. to describe;
3. to explore/learn;
4. to entertain;
5. to inform;
6. to explain;
7. to argue;
8. to persuade;
9. to evaluate;
10. to problem solve;
11. to mediate.

However, it should also be noted that writers often combine purposes in a single piece of writing. Thus, we may, in a business

report, begin by informing readers of the economic facts before we try to persuade them to take a certain course of action. The purpose for writing must be considered before selecting a sentence type. Is the writer trying to entertain, persuade, tell a story, or describe? Sentences that describe are often long, while those that persuade may be much shorter. However, this guideline is not firm: The length and complexity of the sentences also depends on the audience, topic, and personal style.

- *Audience.*

An audience is a group of readers who read a particular piece of writing. Our audience might be teachers, classmates, the president of an organization, the staff of a management company, or any other number of possibilities. Audiences come in all shapes and sizes. They may be a group of similar people or combinations of different groups of people. Writers need to determine who they are in order to analyse the audience and write effectively.

When we speak to someone face-to-face, we always know with whom we are talking. We automatically adjust our speech to be sure we communicate our message. We change what we say because we know our audience. Many writers do not make the same adjustments when they write to different audiences, usually because they do not take the time to think about who will be reading what they write. But to be sure that we communicate clearly in writing, we need to adjust our message—how we say it and what information we include—by recognizing that different readers can best understand different messages. As a concept, this rule sounds so simple: Think about who will read your paper before and while you write and adjust your writing to help your reader understand it.

Writers determine their audience types by considering:

- who the readers are (age, sex, education, occupation, economic status, area of residence, ethnic ties, political/social/religious beliefs, etc.);
- what level of information these readers have about the subject (novice, general reader, specialist, or expert);

- what opinions, values, prejudices, and biases these readers already possess about the subject.

Writers need to know their audience before they start writing because all readers have expectations and all readers assume what they read will meet their expectations. As writers, we should anticipate the needs or expectations of our audience in order to convey information or argue for a particular claim. A writer's job is to make sure those expectations are met, while at the same time, fulfilling the purpose of the writing.

- *Subject.* The choice of sentence types also depends on the subject matter. The more complex the ideas are, the simpler the sentences should be. This helps the audience grasp the ideas.

Overall, most effective sentences are concise, conveying their meaning in as few words as possible. Effective sentences stress the main point or the most important detail. This ensures that the readers understand the writer's point. Most writers—professional as well as amateur—use a combination of all four sentence types to convey their meaning.

- ***Sentence Errors: Run-on (fused) Sentences and Comma Splices***

There are two basic types of sentence errors: *fragments* and *run-on (fused) sentences.* These problems with sentence construction confuse the readers and obscure the meaning. Their use will also result in clumsy, unpolished writing and speech. Let's look at each of these sentence errors in detail so that they will be fixed with ease.

As you have learned, there are two types of clauses: *independent* and *dependent.*

- *Independent clauses* are complete sentences because they have a subject, a verb, and express a complete thought.

E.g.: I go to the cinema every Saturday night.

Richard Nixon's favourite drink was a dry martini.

- *Dependent clauses* cannot stand alone because they do not express a complete thought, even though they have a subject and a verb.

E.g.: Since *I enjoy* the films (subject. verb).

Because Richard Nixon's favourite *drink was* a dry martini (subject. verb).

A *run-on (fused) sentence* is two incorrectly joined independent clauses. A *comma splice* is a run-on sentence with a comma where the two independent clauses run together. When the sentences run together, the ideas are garbled.

Run-on: Our eyes are always the same size from birth our nose and ears never stop growing.

Corrected: Our eyes are always the same size from birth, *but* our nose and ears never stop growing.

Run-on: A duck's quack doesn't echo, no one knows why.

Corrected: A duck's quack doesn't echo; no one knows why. *or* A duck's quack doesn't echo, *and* no one knows why.

Run-on: The traditional sonnet has 14 lines, 10 syllables make up each line.

Corrected: The traditional sonnet has 14 lines; 10 syllables make up each line. *or* The traditional sonnet has 14 lines, *and* 10 syllables make up each line.

A run-on sentence can be corrected in four ways. Let's use the following example:

Water and wind are the two main causes of erosion, they constantly change the appearance of the Earth.

1. Divide the run-on sentence into two sentences with the appropriate end punctuation, such as a full stop, exclamation mark, or a question mark:

Water and wind are the two main causes of erosion. They constantly change the appearance of the Earth.

2. Add a coordinating conjunction (*and, nor, but, or, for, yet, so*) to create a compound sentence:

Water and wind are the two main causes of erosion, ***for*** *they constantly change the appearance of the Earth.*

3. Add a subordinating conjunction to create a complex sentence:

Since *water and wind are the two main causes of erosion, they constantly change the appearance of the Earth*.

4. Use a semicolon to create a compound sentence:

Water and wind are the two main causes of erosion; they constantly change the appearance of the Earth.

Here is what the sentence looks like with a conjunctive adverb added:

Water and wind are the two main causes of erosion; ***as a result****, they constantly change the appearance of the Earth*.

Which corrected version will be chosen? The one that best suits the audience, purpose, and writing style must be selected. The writer must ask him/herself these questions:

- Which version will my readers like best?
- Which version will most clearly and concisely communicate my message?
- Which version fits best with the rest of the passage?

- ***Sentence Errors: Fragments***

As its name suggests, a *sentence fragment* is a group of words that do not express a complete thought. Fragments, or incomplete sentences, occur quite frequently when we speak, so it is no wonder sentence fragments are often found in formal writing. Most times, a fragment is missing a subject, a verb, or both. Other times, a fragment may have a subject and a verb but still not express a complete thought. Fragments can be phrases as well as clauses.

Sometimes fragments occur during the editing process, in trying to break up a longer sentence. Consider the following: *In class today we talked about Byron's poem Don Juan and its main characters. Also Byron's own life and how it related to his works.*

Again, the second phrase includes several nouns and a verb, but it cannot stand alone. The subject of the first sentence is "we" and the verb "talked." Since the clause is dependant (a clause that makes no sense except when attached to a sentence) it should not form a sentence.

Sentence fragments are common and acceptable in speech, but not in writing — unless you are recreating dialogue in a short story or novel.

There are three main ways that fragments occur.

1. Fragments occur when a dependent clause masquerades as a sentence:

E.g.: Because more and more teenagers are staying up far too late.

E.g.: Since they do not compensate for the sleep they miss.

2. Fragments also happen when a phrase is cut off from the sentence it describes.

E.g.: Used to remove a wide variety of stains on carpets and upholstery.

E.g.: Trying to prevent the new cotton shirt from shrinking in the dryer.

3. A fragment can also be created if the wrong form of a verb is used.

E.g.: The frog *gone* to the pond by the reservoir.

E.g.: Saffron *being* a very costly and pungent spice.

A fragment can be corrected in several ways:

1. Add the missing part to the sentence.

Fragment: Because more and more teenagers are staying up far too late.

Complete: Because more and more teenagers are staying up far too late, they are sleep deprived.

Fragment: Since they do not compensate for the sleep they miss.

Complete: Since they do not compensate for the sleep they miss, teenagers often get cranky in the afternoon.

Fragment: Used to remove a wide variety of stains on carpets and upholstery.

Complete: This product is used to remove a wide variety of stains on carpets and upholstery.

Fragment: Trying to prevent the new cotton shirt from shrinking in the dryer.

Complete: Jean was trying to prevent the new cotton shirt from shrinking in the dryer.

2. Correct the misused verb.

Fragment: The frog *gone* to the pond by the reservoir.

Complete: The frog *went* to the pond by the reservoir.

Fragment: Saffron *being* a very costly and pungent spice.

Complete: Saffron *is* a very costly and pungent spice.

3. Omit the subordinating conjunction or connect it to another sentence.

Fragment: *Because* more and more teenagers are staying up far too late.

Complete: More and more teenagers are staying up far too late.

Fragment: *Since* they do not compensate for the sleep they miss.

Complete: They do not compensate for the sleep they miss.

4. Add a comma and connect the clause to the sentence

In class today, we talked about Byron's poem and its main characters, as well as Byron's own life and how it related to his works.

5. If the sentence becomes too long or wordy, add the necessary subject-verb to the clause, creating a second sentence.

In class today, we talked about Byron's poem and its main characters. We also discussed Byron's own life and how it related to his works.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Some of the sentences are correct and some are incorrect. Write a C if the sentences in the group are all complete and an F if any of the sentences in the group is a fragment. Explain why the fragments are incomplete sentences.

____ 1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. A junior high that was a bad experience.

____ 2. The scene was filled with beauty. Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind.

____ 3. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.

____ 4. Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them.

____ 5. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.

____ 6. It can be really embarrassing to be so emotional. Especially when you are on your first date, you feel that you should be in control.

____ 7. The magazine has a reputation for a sophisticated, prestigious, and elite group of readers. Although that is a value judgment and in circumstances not a true premise.

____ 8. In the seventh grade every young boy goes out for football. To prove to himself and his parents that he is a man.

____ 9. She opened the door and let us into her home. Not realizing at the time that we would never enter that door in her home again.

____10. As Christmas grows near, I find myself looking back into my childhood days at fun-filled times of snowball fights. To think about this makes me happy.

Exercise 2. Identify the correct sentence type for each sentence.

1. Resistance to antibiotics is a worldwide problem, but medical experts list ways to help slow resistance and keep current drugs effective.

2. When you go to the doctor with a cold or the flu, don't automatically ask for antibiotics.

3. Colds and flu are caused by viruses, and antibiotics don't work to fight them, so you should discuss other remedies with your doctor.

4. If the doctor prescribes antibiotics, follow directions and take all of the medicine.

5. Not taking the medicine as prescribed could allow the infection to re-establish itself in your body and become more resistant to the drugs later.

6. Taking more than one antibiotic at once or taking left over antibiotics in your medicine cabinet may increase the chance of resistance.

7. Keep current with your vaccinations; this can prevent you from getting infectious diseases and needing the antibiotics.

8. Remember to practice personal cleanliness as simple hand washing and proper food handling can help protect you from infectious diseases.

9. Improper use of antibiotics helps develop drug resistance, so many medicines that were strongly effective a few decades ago don't work at all in the present.

10. When bacteria is resistant to antibiotics, the only option may be to remove the infection with surgery.

Exercise 3. Join the two independent clauses with one of the coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet) or a conjunctive adverb and use a comma before the connecting word and a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb.

1. He enjoys walking through the country. He often goes backpacking on his vacations.

2. He often watched TV when there were only reruns. She preferred to read instead.

3. They weren't dangerous criminals. They were detectives in disguise.

4. I didn't know which job I wanted. I was too confused to decide.

Exercise 4.

a) In each group, there is only one correct sentence. Identify it:

A. Our town has four restaurants only one is open at 7:00 am.

B. Our town has four restaurants, only one is open at 7:00 am.

C. Our town has four restaurants; only one, is open at 7:00 am.

D. Our town has four restaurants; only one is open at 7:00 am.

E. Only one is open at 7:00 am, our town has four restaurants.

A. Look through the window you can see the mountain peaks in the distance.

B. If you look through the window, you can see the mountain peaks in the distance.

C. Look through the window, you can see the mountain peaks in the distance.

D. You can see the mountain peaks in the distance, look through the window.

A. Larry is never interested in going for a run in the winter however in the summer he'll take a brief jog.
B. Larry is never interested in going for a run in the winter, however, in the summer he'll take a brief jog.
C. Larry is never interested in going for a run in the winter however, in the summer he'll take a brief jog.
D. Larry is never interested in going for a run in the winter; however in the summer he'll take a brief jog.
E. Larry is never interested in going for a run in the winter; however, in the summer he'll take a brief jog.

A. We've done all that we can here pack up the supplies.
B. We've done all that we can here, pack up the supplies.
C. Pack up the supplies, we've done all that we can here.
D. We've done all that we can here; pack up the supplies.

b) Which one is NOT a sentence fragment?

A. Although it was a more difficult test than the students had ever taken.
B. We decided to study before we went out to the party.
C. Her ability to remember details, after all, not what is used to be.

A. Sand piling up along the beach.
B. She wanted to use a shovel to dig a hole in the ground.
C. However, who wanted to be the winner of the contest.

A. Bobby receiving more than sixty boxes of donations this year.
B. Leaving for Florida soon.
C. Since Susan hasn't seen the dentist, her teeth are rotten.

c) What do the following sentences need?

Planning on getting married for over a year.

A. The sentence is correct.

B. The group of words is a dependent clause and can't stand alone as a sentence.

C. The group of words is a phrase and is missing a verb; it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

D. The group of words is a run-on or comma splice and needs a conjunction or semicolon.

Laughing that hard made my stomach hurt, I had to sit down.

A. The sentence is correct.

B. The group of words is a dependent clause and can't stand alone as a sentence.

C. The group of words is a phrase and is missing a verb; it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

D. The group of words is a run-on or comma splice and needs a conjunction.

Until I receive confirmation that you have enrolled in classes this semester.

A. The sentence is correct.

B. The group of words is a dependent clause and can't stand alone as a sentence.

C. The group of words is a phrase and is missing a verb; it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

D. The group of words is a run-on or comma splice and needs a conjunction.

Pauline yelled at the boy teetering on the bridge he fell in.

A. The sentence is correct.

B. The group of words is a dependent clause and can't stand alone as a sentence.

C. The group of words is a phrase and is missing a verb; it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

D. The group of words is a run-on or comma splice and needs a conjunction.

Bobby is pleased with the purchase he made earlier in the day.

A. The sentence is correct.

B. The group of words is a dependent clause and can't stand alone as a sentence.

C. The group of words is a phrase and is missing a verb; it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

D. The group of words is a run-on or comma splice and needs a conjunction.

Exercise 5. Use semicolons and/or commas to revise each comma splice or run-on sentence into a correct compound sentence. If the sentence is already correct, write "correct".

1. I read the question too quickly, as a result, I gave the wrong answer.
2. Griffin set up a new website it combined creativity with ease of use.
3. We rented a house at the beach, however, only four people agreed to contribute.
4. The new stereo sounds wonderful, but it is too big for this small space.
5. The company in Brazil makes widgets, they are selling briskly.
6. Meredith looked at the cartoon, then a wide smile broke out on her face.
7. When he came to the stop sign, Bill made a sharp left hand turn.
8. Grandpa slept in a chair by the fire, I hated to wake him.
9. The weather forecast is calling for heavy rain, therefore, we cancelled the picnic.
10. No one answered the door, but the visitor left a note anyway.

Exercise 6. Revise the following sentences to eliminate fused sentences or comma splices.

1. Many North American cars cost less than foreign cars however, foreign cars get better mileage.

2. Traffic jams in major cities have got out of hand car pools should be mandatory.

3. Three-dimensional television films have recently become popular, 3-D glasses can be purchased at most convenience stores.

4. The restaurant looks tacky to me, all the tablecloths are made of plastic.

5. We've spent all our money, therefore; we won't be dining out tonight.

6. The abacus is an ancient computational device, in skilful hands, it can calculate sums as quickly as most modern gadgets.

7. The woman's skills are perfect for the new position we intend to promote her.

8. The team lost seven games in a row, consequently, the coach was fired.

9. Here is the chief administrator, he will solve our problems.

10. He phoned his fiancée repeatedly but she refused to return his calls.

Exercise 7. Based on what you know and what you have learned, suggest some steps for Romanian/ Russian-speaking learners of English on how to avoid making mistakes while writing sentences completely and correctly in English.

Sentence Coordination and Subordination

- *Coordinating Sentence Parts*
- *Subordinating Sentence Parts*
- *Coordination versus Subordination*
- *Parallel Structures*

- ***Coordinating Sentence Parts***

We have learned how to connect the parts of a sentence to avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments. There is more to connecting sentence parts than just linking them, however. One has to decide which parts of each sentence to emphasize and why. The proper emphasis helps to communicate ideas in writing with strength and style. Sometimes one wants to show that two or more ideas are equally important in a sentence. This is the case of coordination. Sentence *coordination* links ideas of equal importance. This process gives one's writing balance by bringing together related independent clauses. Coordination involves using the right word or mark of punctuation to show different relationships between ideas. There are four different ways to coordinate sentence parts:

1. Use a coordinating conjunction.

2. Use a pair of correlative conjunctions.

3. Use a semicolon.

4. Use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb.

Let's look at each method now.

1. Use a coordinating conjunction.

While writing, use the coordinating conjunction that conveys the precise relationship between ideas that you seek. Each of the coordinating conjunctions has a different meaning, as the following chart shows:

Coordinating Conjunction	Meaning	Function
and	in addition to	to link ideas
but	however	to contrast ideas
for	because, as	to show cause
nor	negative	to reinforce negative
or	choice	to show possibilities
so	therefore	to show result
yet	despite that	to show contrast or difference

- "For" presents a reason:

He is gambling with his health, for he has been smoking far too long.

He smiled at this thought for he knew all too well that appearances were not always what they appeared to be.

- "And" presents non-contrasting items or ideas:

They gamble and they smoke.

- "Nor" presents a non-contrasting negative idea:

They neither gamble nor smoke.

- "But" presents a contrast or exception:

They gamble, but they don't smoke.

- "Or" presents an alternative item or idea:

Every day, they gamble or they smoke.

- "Yet" presents a contrast or exception:

They gamble, yet they don't smoke.

- "So" presents a consequence:

He gambled well last night, so he smoked a cigar to celebrate.

When you connect two main clauses with a coordinating conjunction, use a comma. The pattern looks like this:

main clause + , + coordinating conjunction + main clause.

E.g.: 1. She remained silent, ***for*** her heart was heavy and her spirits low.

2. He doesn't want to stay home for Christmas, ***nor*** does he want to travel far.

3. He's overweight and bald, **(and)** ***yet*** somehow, he's attractive.

2. Use a pair of correlative conjunctions.

Link sentences with a correlative conjunction if you want to show a balance between two independent clauses: *either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, both . . . and.* Other pairs that sometimes have a coordinating function include the following: *as . . . as, just as . . . so, the more . . . the less, the more . . . the more, no sooner . . . than, so . . . as, whether . . . or*

E.g.: 1. ***Either*** you leave now ***or*** I call the police!

2. ***Not only*** did he turn up late, he ***also*** forgot his books.

3. ***Whether*** you stay ***or*** go is your decision.

4. ***Just as*** many Americans love football, ***so*** many Canadians love ice hockey.

3. Use a semicolon.

Link independent clauses with a semicolon to show that the ideas are of equal importance.

E.g.: 1. A cause is what happens; the effect is the result.

2. The mechanic adjusted the carburettor; Tina's car now runs smoothly.

4. Use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb.

There are many different conjunctive adverbs. Some are single words; others are phrases:

accordingly,	nevertheless,	consequently,
furthermore,	then,	instead,
moreover,	besides,	now,
similarly,	incidentally,	thus,
also,	next,	finally,
hence,	thereafter,	likewise,
namely,	certainly,	otherwise,
still,	indeed,	undoubtedly,
anyway,	nonetheless,	further,
however,	therefore,	meanwhile.

A semicolon and a conjunctive adverb together indicate different relationships, depending on the conjunctive adverb. The relationships are chiefly examples, continuation, and contrast.

E.g.: 1. I wanted to go; ***however***, I was too busy.

2. The check was for more than the balance; ***consequently***, it bounced.

3. These things really happened; ***otherwise***, I wouldn't have claimed to have seen them.

Follow these steps when you coordinate independent clauses:

- Decide which ideas can and should be combined.
- Select the method of coordination that shows the appropriate relationship between ideas.

Each way to coordinate sentences establishes a slightly different relationship between ideas. Often, there is no "right" answer when you are choosing which conjunctions and punctuation to use to coordinate ideas. As always, keep the "big three" considerations in mind:

- *Audience.* Your readers and their expectations
- *Purpose.* Why you are writing (to entertain, instruct, persuade, describe)
- *Style.* Your personal choices in diction (words) and sentence structure.

With practice, one will discover that some sentences are smoother and more logical than others. Study the following examples:

Uncoordinated: The dog's fur was tangled. We took her in for grooming.

Coordinated: 1. The dog's fur was tangled, so we took her in for grooming.

2. The dog's fur was tangled; therefore, we took her in for grooming.

3. The dog's fur was tangled; as a result, we took her in for grooming.

Uncoordinated: Jack lost his briefcase. Jack lost his cell phone.

Coordinated: 1. Jack lost both his briefcase and his cell phone.

2. Jack lost not only his briefcase but also his cell phone.

Uncoordinated: Each year it seems to get harder to pay for a college education. At least $500 million in private-sector money is available to help students pay for their college education.

Coordinated: 1. Each year it seems to get harder to pay for a college education, but at least $500 million in private-sector money is available to help students pay for their college education.

2. Each year it seems to get harder to pay for a college education; however, at least $500 million in private-sector money is available to help students pay for their college education.

- ***Subordinating Sentence Parts***

Subordination is connecting two unequal but related clauses with a subordinating conjunction to form a complex sentence. *Coordination* shows the relationship among equal independent clauses; *subordination,* in contrast, shows the relationship between ideas of unequal rank. When one part of a sentence is subordinated to another, the dependent clause develops the main clause. Subordination helps to develop ideas, trace relationships among ideas, and emphasize one idea over the other. Therefore, subordination will give the writing (and speech!) greater logic, coherence, and unity. As with sentence coordination, sentence subordination calls for logic and thought.

Follow these four steps to subordinate sentence ideas:

1. First choose the idea or clause that you think is the most important.

2. Then make this your main clause by adding a subject or verb, if necessary. Make sure the main clause expresses a complete idea, too.

3. Choose the subordinating conjunction that best expresses the relationship between the main clause and the dependent clause.

4. Decide whether to place the main clause or the dependent clause first. See which order helps you achieve your purpose and appeal to your audience.

There are many subordinating conjunctions, including *after, although, because, before, if, though, since, when, till, unless, wherever, where.* The following list includes some of the most common subordinating conjunctions and the relationships between ideas that they show:

Cause, result - as, because, in order that, since, so that, so, so that; **Concession and Comparison –** although, as, as though, even though, just as, though, whereas, while;

Condition - even if, if, in case, provided that, unless;

Place – where, wherever;

Time – after, as soon as, as long as, before, once, still, till, until, when, whenever, while;

Choice - whether, rather than.

With practice, you'll discover that some sentences are smoother and more logical than others. Study the following examples:

Not subordinated: It snowed all night. School was closed the following day.

Subordinated: 1. *Because* it snowed all night, school was closed the following day.

2. *Since* it snowed all night, school was closed the following day.

Not subordinated: About two million dollars had been bet on the Cincinnati Reds to win. The White Sox were favoured five to one.

Subordinated: 1. *Even though* the White Sox were favoured five to one, about two million dollars had been bet on the Cincinnati Reds to win.

2. *Although* the White Sox were favoured five to one, about two million dollars had been bet on the Cincinnati Reds to win.

Not subordinated: A tornado can pick up a house and drop it hundreds of feet away. These are extremely dangerous storms.

Subordinated: *Since* a tornado can pick up a house and drop it hundreds of feet away, these are extremely dangerous storms.

Not subordinated: The case was finally tried. The three men denied having made any confessions. They denied having been involved in any way in the rigging scheme. There was no proof against them.

Subordinated: 1. *When* the case was finally tried, the three men denied having made any confessions. They also denied having been involved in any way in the rigging scheme because there was no proof against them.

2. *When* the case was finally tried, the three men denied having made any confessions and having been involved in any way in the rigging scheme because there was no proof against them.

Not subordinated: A tornado is one of the smallest of all types of storms. It is one of the most dangerous of all storms because of its swiftly spinning winds and unpredictable path.

Subordinated: 1. *Even though* a tornado is one of the smallest of all types of storms, it is one of the most dangerous of all storms because of its swiftly spinning winds and unpredictable path.

One should be careful not to switch the main clause and the dependent clause when they are subordinated. If the main idea is in a dependent clause, the sentence will not be logical.

Illogical: Because people stared at her, Rikki wore a see-through blouse.

Cause and effect are reversed, so the sentence does not make sense.

Logical: Because Rikki wore a see-through blouse, people stared at her.

- ***Coordination versus Subordination***

How can one decide which ideas need to be coordinated and which ones need to be subordinated? The decision should be based on the ideas in the sentences. Here are some guidelines when deciding whether to coordinate or subordinate:

- *Coordinate* when you want to link related independent clauses.
- *Subordinate* when you want to put the most important idea in the main clause.

Here are some examples.

Two clauses: The ground began to tremble. The air was heavy with fear.

Coordinated: The ground began to tremble *and* the air was heavy with fear.

Subordinated: *When* the ground began to tremble, the air was heavy with fear (subordinate clause + main clause).

The emphasis is on the feeling of fear, the information in the main clause.

Subordinated: The air was heavy with fear *as* the ground began to tremble (main clause + subordinate clause).

The emphasis is on trembling ground, the information in the main clause.

- *Parallel Structures*

Parallel structure means putting ideas of the same rank in the same grammatical structure, that is the same structures such as tenses, phrases, clauses, and conjunctions have the same grammatical structures in the sentence. Sentence elements that are alike in function should also be alike in construction. These elements should be in the same grammatical form so that they are parallel. Failure to express such items in similar grammatical form is called faulty parallelism.

Parallel constructions are subject to a strict rule of style: they must be in the same grammatical form. Consider this opening of a sentence by the eighteenth-century political writer Edmund Burke:

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind. . . .

According to the rule the four subjects of the verb are must be in the same grammatical form, and Burke has made them all infinitives. They could have been gerunds {*complaining, murmuring, lamenting, conceiving*) or nouns {*complaints, murmurs, laments, conceptions*).

Parallel sentences have several advantages. First, they are impressive and pleasing to hear, elaborate yet rhythmic and ordered, following a master plan with a place for everything and everything in its place. Second, parallelism is economical, using one element of a sentence to serve three or four others. Piling up several verbs after a single subject is probably the most common parallel pattern, as in the two examples just above. Paralleling verbs is particularly effective when describing a process or event. The sequence of the verbs analyses the event and establishes its progress, and the concentration on verbs, without the recurrent intervention of the subject, focuses the sentence

on action. Here is an example, a description of prairie dogs, written by the American historian Francis Parkman:

As the danger drew near they would wheel about, toss their heads in the air, and dive in a twinkling into their burrows.

Here are the parallelism rules**.**

1. Use parallel structure with elements joined by coordinating conjunctions.

Faulty: Your company and what its potential is are of great value to me.

Correct: Your company and its potential is are of great value to me

2. Use parallel structure with elements in lists or in a series**.**

Faulty: The tribes emphasised collective survival, mutual aid, and being responsible for one another.

Correct: The tribes emphasised collective survival, mutual aid, and responsibility for one another.

3. Use parallel structure with elements being compared. (X is *more than / better than* Y**)**

Faulty: I like swimming better than to dive.

Correct: I like swimming better than diving.

4. Use parallel structure with elements joined by the verb *to be***.**

Faulty: To succeed is opening a new opportunity.

Correct: To succeed is to open a new opportunity

5. Use parallel structure with elements joined by a correlative conjunction**.**

Faulty: Every single evening either the horned owl or the cats that are squabbling wake Samantha with their racket.

Correct: Every single evening either the horned owl or the squabbling cats wake Samantha with their racket**.**

Here are some more examples on how to improve the writing by using parallel constructions:

Tenses:

Incorrect: Lucy travelled to Taiwan, ~~was meeting~~ many Taiwanese people and made friends.

Correct: Lucy travelled to Taiwan, met many Taiwanese people and made friends with them.

Incorrect: The doctor is seeing a patient now, and ~~sees~~ you in a short while.

Correct: The doctor is seeing a patient now, and will see you in a short while.

Infinitive form of verbs:

Incorrect: I like to sing, ~~traveling~~ and ~~meeting~~ new people.

Correct: I like to sing, to travel and to meet new people.

Gerund form of verbs:

Incorrect: Cooking is always fun for me, but ~~to sing~~ not at all.

Correct: Cooking is always fun for me, but singing not at all.

Adjectives:

Incorrect: Children are happy, ~~energy~~ and curious.

Correct: Children are happy, energetic and curious.

Nouns:

Incorrect: I eat lots of fruit and vegetable, avoid ~~sweet~~.

Correct: I eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and avoid sugar.

Correct: I eat lots of fruits and vegetable and avoid sweet food.

Your writing and speech should have parallel words, phrases, and clauses. Parallel structure gives your writing many admirable strengths, including tempo, stress, balance, and conciseness.

1. *Parallel words* share the same part of speech (such as nouns, adjectives, or verbs) and tense (if the words are verbs).

To some people, travelling by air is *safe, inexpensive,* and *convenient.*

To others, it's *dangerous*, *expensive*, and *inconvenient*.

You should eat foods that are *nourishing* as well as *tasty.*

2. *Parallel phrases* contain modifiers.

Polyester shirts *wash easily*, *drip*-dry *quickly*, and *wear durably*.

Nick took the new job to *learn more about finance, make important connections, and get a health plan.*

3. *Parallel clauses* can be independent or dependent clauses.

I came, I saw, I conquered.

"Our chiefs are killed; Looking-Glass is dead; Ta-Hool-Shute is dead." (Chief Joseph's surrender speech, 1877).

Exercises

Exercise 1. Select the word that best completes each sentence.

1. A lightning bolt lasts a fraction of a second, (so, but) it has enough power—30 million volts—to light up all of Miami.

2. (And, Because) the average thunderstorm is more powerful than an atomic bomb, injuries from these storms are not uncommon.

3. All the following are coordinating conjunctions except *for, but, or* (*since, and*).

4. All the following are subordinating conjunctions except *since, because, although* (*when, nor*).

5. All the following are conjunctive adverbs except *consequently, furthermore, therefore,* (*nevertheless*, *and*).

6. (*Coordination, Subordination*) is connecting two unequal but related clauses with a subordinating conjunction to form a complex sentence.

7. (*Subordination*, *Parallel structure*) means putting ideas of the same rank in the same grammatical structure.

8. The film industry changed from silent films to the "talkies" in the late 1920s, (when, after) the success in 1927 of *The Jazz Singer.*

9. Ari is very good about staying in shape: He likes to ride his bicycle, to jog around the track, and (swimming, to go swimming).

10. The committee considered the letter, talked about its major points, and (the unanimous decision was made to ignore it, unanimously decided to ignore it).

Exercise 2. Recombine the sentences in the following paragraphs to create a more logical and graceful style.

1. Lightning often strikes twice in the same place. It is more likely to do so. Why is this so? Lightning is an electric current. As with all electric currents or discharges, lightning will follow the path of least resistance. It will take the route that is easiest for it to travel on. Air is a very poor conductor of electricity. Almost anything else that helps to bridge the gap between the ground and a cloud will offer a more convenient path and thus "attract" the lightning. This includes a high tree, a building (especially one with a metal framework), a tall hill.

2. In 1866, John Styth Pemberton came up with a headache medicine he called "Coca-Cola." He had taken the wine out of the French Wine Coca. He added some caffeine. The medicine tasted so terrible that at the last minute he added some extract of kola nut. He added a few other oils. He sold it to soda fountains in used bottles. A few weeks later, a man with a terrible headache hauled himself into a drugstore. The man asked for a spoonful of Coca-Cola. The druggist was too lazy to stir the headache remedy into a glass of water. He mixed the syrup in some seltzer water. The seltzer water was closer to where he was standing. The customer liked the carbonated version better than the noncarbonated one. Other customers agreed. From then on, Coca-Cola was served as a carbonated drink.

3. Some time near the beginning of the seventh century, a monk formed some leftover dough into a looped twist. Some sources claim that the twists were meant to represent the folded arms of children at prayer, but even by a considerable stretch of the imagination it is hard to match a pretzel's shape with the usual position of arms at prayer. The pretzels soon became popular and were often given to children who were faithful in their religious observations. As a result, the baked and salted dough came to be called *pretiola,* the Latin for "little reward." From *pretiola* to *pretzel* is only a small step.

Exercise 3. Combine the simple sentences below into compound or complex sentences by using different ways of connecting (subordination or coordination):

1. The president failed to explain the cause of the crisis. He did not offer any solutions.

2. Akira's wife was due to give birth to their first child in the next several days. He still worked overtime.

3. Rekha had an intense headache all morning. She smiled and remained alert throughout the entire meeting.

4. Enrolment in the university has been dropping in recent years. Its facilities have been lacking proper maintenance.

5. Plans for renovating the city centre into an upscale shopping centre were finalized. Discussions began on budgeting city funds for the project.

6. The nearest supermarket started to carry produce and spices that specifically matched the diets of many people in the community. Shoppers continued to be lured to the big-box store out on the highway.

7. The main office has cut our printing and copying budget. We will need to rely more heavily on e-mail, Skype, and instant messaging.

8. Please respond to this e-mail at a suitable time, so that I can get started here. Include your notes as an attachment.

9. I had to hand the project over to Max. You didn't respond to any of my e-mails.

10. Viktor had prepared and practised for the presentation thoroughly. The projector died and the presentation was not successful.

Exercise 4. Rewrite each sentence to correct all parallelism errors.

1. An actor knows how to memorize his lines and getting into character.

2. Tell me where you were, what you were doing, and your reasons for doing it.

3. Clark's daily exercises include running, swimming, and to lift weights.

4. To donate money to the homeless shelter is helping people stay warm in the winter.

5. Jim not only likes working outside but also getting dirty.

6. We followed the path through the forest, over the hill, and we went across the river.

7. The writer was brilliant but a recluse.

8. She told Jake to take out the trash, to mow the lawn, and be listening for the phone call.

9. Marcie studied for the test by reviewing her class notes and she read her textbook.

10. People fall naturally into two classes; the workers and those who like to lean on others.

Exercise 5. Using parallel words or phrases complete each of the following sentences.

1. When I was a child, I loved to play in the leaves, skip down the driveway, and _____ against the wind.

2. I still enjoy playing in the leaves, skipping down the driveway, and _____ against the wind.

3. Merdine danced a jig and then _____ a song that took my heart away.

4. Merdine said that she wanted to dance a jig and then _____ a song that would take my heart away.

5. The children spent the afternoon playing video games, watching TV, and _____ donuts.

6. If you want to learn how to play video games, watch TV, or _____ donuts, spend an afternoon with my children.

7. All that you need to make a great tomato sandwich is whole-wheat bread, a sliced sweet onion, two lettuce leaves, mustard or mayonnaise, and a juicy _____.

8. To make a great tomato sandwich, begin by toasting two pieces of whole-wheat bread and _____ a sweet onion.

9. Whatever you have, you must either use it or _____ it.

10. It is easier to build strong children than to _____ broken adults.

11. I divided my time between my music and my _____.

12. Giving is better than _____.

13. It is better to give than _____ _____.

14. People can hurt others not only by their actions but also by their _____.

15. Children cannot learn well if they lack adequate health care, nutrition, and _____.

Exercise 6. Write a short paragraph about an interesting place you have visited/ an interesting book you have read/ a memorable experience using at least three compound and three complex sentences. Explain your choice.

Exercise 7. Write four sentences in Romanian which will be translated in English by using parallel constructions. Ask your colleagues to translate them.

Punctuation

- *Apostrophes*
- *Brackets*
- *Colons*
- *Commas*
- *Dashes*
- *Ellipsis*
- *Exclamation*
- *Marks*
- *Hyphens*
- *Parentheses*
- *Full Stops*
- *Question Marks*
- *Quotation Marks*
- *Semicolons*
- *Slashes*

An English professor wrote the words: "A woman without her man is nothing" on the blackboard and asked his students to punctuate it correctly. All of the males in the class wrote: "A woman, without her man, is nothing." All the females in the class wrote: "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

When speaking, we can pause or change the tone of our voices to indicate emphasis, pause etc. When writing, we must use punctuation to indicate these phenomena. Punctuation is not something you impose upon a sentence after you have written it out. Commas, semicolons, and the other marks are an intimate part of grammar and style. Often mistakes in punctuation do not simply mean that a writer broke an arbitrary rule; rather they signify his or her confusion about how to construct a sentence. To write well, you must punctuate well; but to punctuate well, you must also write well.

It would be nice if punctuation could be reduced to a set of clear, simple directions: always use a comma here, a semicolon there, a dash in such-and-such a place. But it cannot. Much depends, as we have

just seen in the joke, on what you want to do. In fact, punctuation is a mixed bag of absolute rules, general conventions, and individual options.

- ***Apostrophes***

The apostrophe (') is used in three ways:

1. To show possession (ownership);
2. To show plural forms;
3. To show where a letter or number has been omitted.

Let's examine each guideline in depth.

1. The apostrophe is used to show possession.

- With singular nouns or pronouns not ending in *s*, an apostrophe and an *s* is added*:*

Examples: *someone's wish; anyone's game; James's car; the waitress's suggestion; a boy's hat; a woman's hat; an actress's hat; a child's hat; Ms. Chang's house*

NOTE: Although names ending in *s* or an *s* sound are not required to have the second *s* added in possessive form, it is preferred:

Examples: *Mr. Jones's golf clubs Texas's weather Ms. Straus's daughter Jose Sanchez's artwork Dr. Hastings's appointment (*name is *Hastings) Mrs. Lees's books (*name is *Lees)* .

- To show plural possession, the noun must be made plural first. The apostrophe is used immediately:

Examples: *two boys' hats; two actresses' hats; the Changs' house; the Joneses' golf clubs*

- With plural nouns, not ending in *s*, an apostrophe and an *s* is added: *women's hats; children's toys.*
- With a singular compound noun, possession is shown with *'s* at the end of the word. ***Example:*** *my mother-in-law's hat;*
- If the compound noun is plural, the plural must be formed first and then the apostrophe will be used. ***Example:*** *my two brothers-in-law's hats;*
- The apostrophe and *s* are used after the second name only if two people possess the same item. ***Examples:*** *Cesar and Maribel's home is constructed of redwood (*indicates joint ownership);

*Cesar's and Maribel's job contracts will be renewed next year (*ndicates separate ownership).

- An apostrophe is never used with possessive pronouns: *his, hers, its, theirs, ours, yours, whose*. They already show possession so they do not require an apostrophe.

Examples: *This book is hers, not yours.*

Incorrect: *Sincerely your's.*

- Possessive case is used in front of a gerund (-*ing* word).

Examples: *Alex's skating was a joy to behold. This does not stop Joan's inspecting of our facilities next Thursday.*

2. The apostrophe is used to show plural forms. When letters and numerals are used in the plural, they generally simply add -s: e.g. *Learn your ABCs. The 1960s were a period of great change.*

There are, however, three exceptions – here an apostrophe is also required: (1) capital letters in abbreviations with full stops, (2) capital letters that might look confusing with a simple -s plural, and (3) lowercase letters used as nouns:

Example: 1. The university graduated twenty M.A.'s.

2. He makes his A's in an unusual way.

3. Mind your p's and q's.

The apostrophe and *s* are used to show the plural of a number, symbol, or letter, or words used to name themselves:

Examples: *three 7's; two ?'s; your u's look like w's; There are too many distracting like's and um's in her speech*.

3. The apostrophe is used to show where a letter or number has been omitted.

- The apostrophe is used to show where letters have been left out of contractions. When words are contracted, an apostrophe is added in the space where the letters have been taken out.

Examples: *cannot - can't; I will - I'll.*

- The apostrophe is used to show the numbers that have been left out of a date.

Examples: the '70s; the '90s.

- ***Brackets***

Brackets [ ] (square brackets, closed brackets**)** have only two very narrowly defined uses.

1. Brackets are used for editorial clarification to explain further, correct, or comment within a direct quotation:

Children's author Jackie Ogburn puts it this way: "It's not that 'message' isn't a part of the work. It's just that it's usually the least interesting part [emphasis hers]."

2. Brackets are used to enclose words that you insert in a quotation.

When quoted words are integrated into a text, a few words may have to be changed to fit the structure of the sentences. Brackets are mainly used to enclose explanatory or missing material usually added by someone other than the original author, especially in quoted text. They indicate necessary changes from the original text:

Original quote: "This pedagogical approach reduces all our work to the literary equivalent of vitamins." (Ogburn 305)

Quotation with brackets: The primary reason the people involved in creating children's books detest this attitude so much is that "[it] reduces all our work to the literary equivalent of vitamins."

- ***Colons***

1. A colon (:) is used after an independent clause to introduce a list.

E.g: If you really want to lose weight, you must give up the following sweets: cake, pie, candy, and biscuits.

2. A colon is used after an independent clause to introduce a quotation.

E.g: Robert Lawson speaks impatiently of the good intentions that direct the current trends in children's books: "Some of this scattered band may be educators or psychologists or critics, but they are all animated by a ruthless determination to do children good through their books; it is these people who start the theories and fads that are the bane of authors and illustrators and editors and a pain in the neck to children." (Fenner, 47)

3. A colon is used before the part of a sentence that explains what has just been stated. The first sentences expresses a general idea and the second one, introduced by a colon, particularizes the idea.

E.g: Our store has a fixed policy: We will not be undersold.

Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town: parts of Main, Fifth, and West Street are closed during the construction.

4. A colon (in American English) or a comma (in British English) is used after the salutation of a business letter.

E.g: Dear Dr. Lewis:

To Whom It May Concern:

5. A colon is used to distinguish chapter from verse in a Biblical citation, hours from minutes, and titles from subtitles.

E.g: Song of Songs 4:15; 10:15 A.M.; Eating Healthy: A Complete Guide

6. A colon is used to separate the subtitle of a work (which is a noun phrase) from its principal title (another noun phrase).

E.g: *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*

Use of capitalization or lower-case after a colon varies. In British English, the word following the colon is in lower case unless it is a proper noun or an acronym, or if it is normally capitalized for some other reason. However, in American English, many writers capitalize the word following a colon if it begins an independent clause (i.e., a complete sentence)

- ***Commas***

Commas are the most frequently used marks of punctuation in English. In fact, commas occur in writing twice as often as all other marks of punctuation combined! Commas tell us how to read and understand sentences, because they tell us where to pause. A correctly placed comma helps move readers from the beginning of a sentence to the end.

Here's the overall comma alert: as you write, do not add commas just because you paused in your reading. Since everyone pauses at different times, a pause is not a reliable way to judge comma use. Instead, the rules that govern comma use must be relied upon.

1. A comma is used to set off parts of a sentence.

- A comma is used to separate parts of a compound sentence. A comma is used before the coordinating conjunction.

E.g: 1**.** The film was sold out, so we decided to have an early dinner.

2. The film was a blockbuster, but we arrived early enough to get seats.

3. Our friends are easy-going, and they don't get upset when plans change.

- A comma is used to set off dialogue.

E.g: 1. Martha said, "This film won an Academy Award."

2. "This film," Martha said, "won an Academy Award."

3. "This film won an Academy Award," Martha said.

- A comma is used to separate the parts of an address. A comma is not used before the zip code in an address.

E.g: Rick lives at 163 East Plains Drive, Boston, MA 89012.

2. A comma is used after introductory and concluding expressions.

- A comma is used after an introductory word.

E.g: Yes, I will be coming to the retirement party. However, I won't be able to bring a macaroni salad.

- A comma is used after an introductory phrase.

E.g: 1. To get a good night's sleep, you should practice relaxation techniques.

2. Beginning tomorrow, the store will be open until midnight.

- A comma is used after an introductory dependent clause.

E.g: 1. Although the sky is overcast, I don't think that it will rain this afternoon.

2. Since you can't do the dishes, could you please walk the dog tonight?

- A comma is used after the greeting of an informal or formal letter.

E.g: Dear Mom, Dear Mickey,

- A comma is used at the close of any letter.

E.g: Yours truly, Sincerely,

3. A comma is used after interrupting words and expressions.

- Use a comma to set off interrupting words and expressions.

E.g: The State University of New York, did you know, has 64 campuses scattered across New York State.

- A comma is used to set off words of direct address (words that tell to whom a remark is addressed).

E.g: Nancy, please clean up your room. Please clean up your room, Nancy.

- A comma is used with names and titles.

E.g: Ms. Barbara Gilson, Editorial Director; Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.

- A comma is used to set off words in apposition (words that give additional information about the preceding or following word or expression).

E.g: A good eater, my baby will be off the bottle soon. My baby, a good eater, will be off the bottle soon.

- A comma is used to set off a nonessential clause or phrase (that can be omitted without changing the sentence's basic meaning).

E.g: 1. Elizabeth II, *who was born in 1926 in London*, is the queen of England (*non-defining relative clause)*.

2. Prince Charles, *Elizabeth's first child*, was born in 1948 *(appositive)*.

- A comma is used to separate items in a series Although there is no set rule that requires a comma before the last item in a series, it seems to be a general academic convention to include it.

E.g: The store had a sale on hot dogs, watermelon, and paper plates.

Quick Tip

A comma is never used to set off an essential clause, a clause that cannot be omitted:

E.g: Some states retest drivers *who are over age 65* to check their ability to drive safely.

4. A comma is used to prevent misreading.

➢ Use a comma to clarify any potentially confusing sentences.

Confusing: Those who can practice many hours every day.

Clear: Those who can, practice many hours every day.

Rewritten: Those who can practice, do so many hours every day.

Confusing: Luisa dressed and sang for an enthusiastic crowd.

Clear: Luisa dressed, and sang for an enthusiastic crowd.

Rewritten: After Luisa dressed, she sang for an enthusiastic crowd.

5. A comma is used with numbers. A comma is not used when writing telephone numbers, page numbers, or years.

➢ A comma is used between the day of the month and the year. In British usage the comma may be omitted here.

E.g: December 7, 1941; July 20, 1969.

➢ A comma is used to show thousands, millions, and so on.

E.g: 5,000; 50,000; 500,000; 5,000,000.

6. A comma is used with suspended constructions, which occur when two or more units are linked grammatically to the same thing. It is really a form of parallelism, but an unusual or emphatic form, which readers may find difficult. Hence, such constructions are often (though not invariably) punctuated:

E.g.: *1.* Many people believed, *and still do*, that he was taking Nazi money to run his machine. 2. Wallace Sterner Prescott and Parkman were willing, *and Motley reluctant*, to concede that the sixteenth-century Spaniard's desire to convert American Indians had not been hypocritical.

When the idiomatic phrase *more or less* is treated as a suspended construction, it always requires commas to distinguish it from its more common meaning. Usually *more or less* signifies a qualified affirmation, and then is not punctuated:

E.g.: He was *more or less* interested. = He was mildly interested.

- ***Dashes***

Dashes (—) are used to set off or emphasize the content enclosed within dashes or the content that follows a dash. Dashes must be used

lightly or one risks creating a breathless, overly informal style. Dashes, when used sparingly and correctly, can be used to make the writing sound more sophisticated.

The dash has no function that is uniquely its own. Instead, it acts as a strong comma and as a less formal equivalent to the semicolon, the colon, and the parenthesis. As a substitute for the comma, the dash signals a stronger, more significant pause. For that reason it should be used sparingly, reserved for occasions when emphasis is really needed.

- A dash is used to emphasize an example, a definition, or a contrast.

E.g: Two of the strongest animals in the jungle—the elephant and gorilla—are vegetarians.

Two of the strongest animals in the jungle are vegetarians—the elephant and gorilla.

- A dash is used to connect ideas strongly to each other.

E.g: To feed, clothe, and find shelter for the needy--these are real achievements.

- A dash is used to emphasize the contradiction between ideas

E.g: I am under the impression that she has no instructions at all--and doesn't need any.

- A dash is used to set off an appositive phrase that already includes commas. An appositive is a word that adds explanatory or clarifying information to the noun that precedes it.

E.g: The cousins—Tina, Todd, and Sam—arrived at the party together

- The dash isolates final constructions, Dashes force an emphatic pause before the last word or phrase of a sentence:

E.g: Our time is one of disillusion in our species and a resulting lack of self-confidence—for good historical reasons.

- The dash introduces a list. The colon conventionally introduces a series of specifics. The dash, however, is employed for the same purpose. The only difference is that the dash is less formal:

E.g: In short, says the historian Friedrich Heer, the crusades were promoted with all the devices of the propagandist—atrocity stories, over-simplification, lies, inflammatory speeches.

- ***Ellipsis***

The ellipsis (three spaced dots) is used to show that something has been left out of a passage that is quoted. Ellipsis is also used to show a pause in a conversation.

1. The ellipsis is used to show that words or sentences have been deleted from a passage that is quoted.

E.g: Abraham Lincoln said: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth . . . a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

2. The ellipsis is used to show a pause or interruption.

E.g: "No," I said. "I . . . I need some time to think about your offer."

- ***Exclamation Marks***

An exclamation mark is used after an exclamatory sentence. Exclamation marks convey emphasis. Most often, they close a sentence and signal the importance of the total statement. Used after imperative statements ("Come here!"), they suggest the tone of voice in which such a command would be spoken.

E.g: 1. How dare you say that to me!

2. You can't possibly go out wearing that dress!

- ***Hyphens***

A hyphen (-) is smaller than a dash. Traditionally, a hyphen was used to show a word break at the end of a line. However, modern computer software has virtually eliminated this use of the hyphen. Two words brought together as a compound may be written separately, written as one word, or connected by hyphens. For example, three modern dictionaries all have the same listings for the following compounds:

hair stylist
hair-splitter
hair-raiser

Another modern dictionary, however, lists *hairstylist*, not *hair stylist*. Compounding is obviously in a state of flux, and authorities do not always agree in all cases, but the uses of the hyphen offered here are generally agreed upon.

1. A hyphen is used to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun:

a one-way street
chocolate-covered peanuts
well-known author

However, when compound modifiers come after a noun, they are not hyphenated:

The peanuts were *chocolate covered*.
The author was *well known*.

2. A hyphen is used with compound numbers and written-out fractions:

E.g: *You need one-third of a cup of sugar for that recipe.*
forty-six
sixty-three

3. A hyphen is used to avoid confusion or an awkward combination of letters:

re-sign a petition (vs. resign from a job)

4. A hyphen is used with the prefixes ex- (meaning former), *self-, all-*; with the suffix *-elect*; between a prefix and a capitalized word; and with figures or letters:

E.g: *un-American*
ex-husband
self-assured
mid-September
all-inclusive
mayor-elect
anti-American
T-shirt
pre-Civil War
mid-1980s

- ***Italics***

Underlining and italics are often used interchangeably. Before word-processing programs were widely available, writers would underline certain words to indicate to publishers to italicize whatever was underlined. Although the general trend has been moving toward italicizing instead of underlining, you should remain consistent with your choice throughout your paper.

➢ The titles of magazines, books, newspapers, academic journals, films, television shows, long poems, plays of three or more acts, operas, musical albums, works of art, websites, and individual trains, planes, or ships are italicized.

E.g.: *Time*

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

The Metamorphosis of Narcissus by Salvador Dali

Amazon.com

Titanic

➢ Foreign words are italicized.

Semper fi, the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps, means "always faithful."

➢ A word or phrase is italicized to add emphasis.

The *truth* is of utmost concern!

➢ A word is italicized when referring to that word.

The word *justice* is often misunderstood and therefore misused.

- ***Parentheses***

1. Parentheses are used to enclose additional information in a sentence. Parentheses are used to emphasize content. They place more emphasis on the enclosed content than commas. Use parentheses to set off nonessential material, such as dates, clarifying information, or sources, from a sentence. In essence, the information in the parentheses is a nonessential modifier because it gives the reader additional information that is not crucial.

E.g: Muhammed Ali (1942-present), arguably the greatest athlete of all time, claimed he would "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

2. Parentheses are used to enclose numbers or letters.

E.g: To prepare spaghetti, follow these steps in order: (1) Bring a pot of lightly salted water to boil; (2) add pasta; (3) cook about 10 minutes, to taste.

- ***Full Stop (Period)***

1. A full stop is used after a complete sentence.

E.g: The shrimp's heart is in its head.

2. A full stop is used after most abbreviations and initials. If an abbreviation comes at the end of a sentence, do not add another full stop: *Dr., Ms., Jr., John F. Kennedy*.

3. A full stop is never used after acronyms: *CNN; ABC; CBS.*

4. A full stop is used after each Roman numeral, letter, or number in an outline:

I. A. B. 1. 2.

- ***Question Marks***

A question mark is used after a question.

E.g: Where is the complaint desk?

Will the store be open late tonight?

Indirect questions do not close with a question mark but with a full stop. Like direct questions they demand a response, but they are expressed as declarations without the formal characteristics of a question. That is, they have no inversion, no interrogative words, and no special intonation.

- ***Quotation Marks (Inverted Commas)***

Quotation marks are used with (1) direct quotations, (2) certain titles, and (3) words given a special sense. Quote marks have two forms: double ("... ") and single (' . . . ') . Most American writers prefer double quotes, switching to single should they need to mark a quote within a quote. British writers are more likely to begin with single quotes, switching, if necessary, to double. Whether single or double, the quote at the beginning is called an opening quotation mark; the one at the end, a closing.

1. Quotation marks are used to set off a speaker's exact words.

E.g: "Did you eat the entire bag of chips?" Debbie squealed.

2. Quotation marks are used to set off the titles of short works such as poems, essays, songs, short stories, and magazine articles. Some titles of literary works are italicized (in typescript, underlined), others are placed in quote marks. The basic consideration is whether the work was published or presented separately or rather as part of something larger (for example, a magazine or collection). In the first case the title is italicized; in the second, set within quotes. In practical terms, this means that the titles of books, plays, and long poems, such as the Iliad, are italicized, while the titles of short stories, short poems, essays, articles in magazines or other periodicals, and the titles of chapters or sections within a book are quoted:

E.g: 1. Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms* has been made into a film.

2. *A Winter's Tale* is one of Shakespeare's so-called problem comedies.

3. "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner is a shocking short story.

4. In *Vanity Fair* Thackeray calls one chapter "How to Live on Nothing a Year."

The titles of films are italicized, those of television and radio shows are quoted

3. Single quotation marks are used to set off quoted material or the titles of short works within a quotation enclosed by double quotation marks.

E.g: "Did you read 'The Ransom of Red Chief' last night?" the teacher asked.

4. Quotation marks are used to set off words used for emphasis or a definition.

E.g: The proposed "tax reform" is really nonsense.

5. When a word is defined, its meaning is sometimes put in quotes, the word itself being italicized.

- ***Semicolons***

A semicolon is a comma and full stop combined, like this (;). The semicolon's structure shows that the semicolon is a hybrid of a comma

and a full stop. It is a stronger stop than a comma but not as strong as a full stop.

1. A semicolon is used to join two independent clauses when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.

E.g: The chef cooked far too much chicken; we eagerly devoured the excess.

Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town; streets have become covered with bulldozers, trucks, and cones.

2. A semicolon is used between main clauses connected by conjunctive adverbs such as *however, nevertheless, moreover, for example,* and *consequently*.

E.g: I have paid my dues; therefore, I expect all the privileges listed in the contract.

Terrorism in the United States has become a recent concern; in fact, the concern for America's safety has led to an awareness of global terrorism.

3. A semicolon is used to join independent clauses when one or both clauses contain a comma.

E.g: Glenn, who is an accomplished musician, wanted to perform at his sister's wedding; but he quickly discovered that Marcia, the maid of honour, had other plans for the entertainment.

4. Semicolons are conventionally used to separate all the items in a list or series when any of the items contains a comma. This is done because the presence of a comma within one or more items requires a stronger stop to signal the distinction between one unit in the series and another. Even when a comma occurs in only one item, consistency requires that semicolons be used between all the elements of the series:

E.g.: He [Huey Long] damned and insulted Bigness in all its Louisiana manifestations: Standard Oil, the state's dominant and frequently domineering industry; the big corporations; the corporation lawyers.

- ***Slashes***

This is a slash (/).

1. The slash is used to indicate a line break when quoting multiple lines from a poem, play, or headline. In this case, a space is placed before and after the slash.

E.g: Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, / But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

2. The slash is most commonly used as the word substitute for "or" which indicates a choice is present.

E.g: Male/Female, Y/N, He/She

3. The slash is also used in numerical fractions or formulas: ½; 3/4.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Choose the best answer to each question.

1. The apostrophe (') is used in all of the following ways except
(a) To show possession (ownership)
(b) To show plural forms
(c) To show where a letter or number has been omitted
(d) To show where information has been omitted
2. Use a comma in all the following situations except
(a) To separate independent clauses (sentences)
(b) The close of any letter, business as well as personal
(c) After interrupting words and expressions
(d) To set off words of direct address
3. Why is there a comma in the following sentence?
Those who can, practise many hours every day.
(a) To set off a nonessential clause
(b) To prevent misreading
(c) To show an appositive
(d) To separate items in a series
4. What mark of punctuation is used to show that you have left something out of a passage you are quoting?
(a) Brackets
(b) Parenthesis
(c) Ellipsis

(d) Quotation marks

5. Use a dash for all the following reasons except

(a) To emphasize an example

(b) To show a contrast

(c) To set off a speaker's direct words

(d) To set off a definition

6. What mark of punctuation is used to show a break in words?

(a) Dash

(b) Slash

(c) Hyphen

(d) Colon

7. Use quotation marks to set off the titles of all the following literary works except

(a) Novels

(b) Poems

(c) Songs

(d) Short stories

8. Which sentence is correctly punctuated?

(a) Tsunamis or seismic sea waves, are gravity waves set in motion by underwater disturbances associated with earthquakes.

(b) Near its origin, the first wave of a tsunami may be the largest; at greater distances, the largest is normally between the second and seventh wave.

(c) Tsunamis consist of a decaying train of waves and, may be detectable on tide gauges, for as long as a week.

(d) These waves are frequently called tidal waves although, they have nothing to do with the tides.

9. Which sentence is correctly punctuated?

(a) Most natural hazards; can be detected before their threat matures.

(b) But seisms have no known precursors, so they come without warning.

(c) For this reason they continue to kill in some areas at a level usually reserved for wars and epidemics—the 11,000 dead in north-eastern Iran died on August 31 1968 not in the ancient past.

(d) The homeless living are left to cope with fire looting pestilence fear, and the burden of rebuilding what the planet so easily shrugs away.

10. Which sentence is correctly punctuated?

(a) Given by the people of France to the people of the United States as a symbol of a shared love of freedom and everlasting friendship, the Statue of Liberty is the largest freestanding sculpture ever created.

(b) It weighs 450000 pounds and rises 1,51 feet above its pedestal.

(c) More than 100 feet, around, Ms. Liberty boasts eyes two and a half feet wide.

(d) Her upraised right arm; extends forty two feet.

Exercise 2. Put commas wherever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. We went to Bar Harbour but did not take the ferry to Nova Scotia.

2. The ginkgo tree whose leaves turn bright yellow in autumn came to this country from Asia.

3. The address for the governor's mansion is 391 West Ferry Road Atlanta Georgia.

4. The villagers enjoyed fairs festivals and good conversation.

5. When the intermission was over the members of the audience moved back to their seats.

6. The girl with the bright friendly smile wore a bright green scarf to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

7. The Mississippi River which once flowed north into Hudson Bay flows south into the Gulf of Mexico.

Exercise 3. Put in semicolons, colons, dashes, quotation marks, italics (use an underline), and parentheses where ever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. The men in question Harold Keene, Jim Peterson, and Gerald Greene deserve awards.

2. Several countries participated in the airlift Italy, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg.

3. Only one course was open to us surrender, said the ex-major, and we did.

4. Judge Carswell later to be nominated for the Supreme Court had ruled against civil rights.

5. In last week's New Yorker, one of my favorite magazines, I enjoyed reading Leland's article How Not to Go Camping.

6. Yes, Jim said, I'll be home by ten.

7. There was only one thing to do study till dawn.

8. Montaigne wrote the following A wise man never loses anything, if he has himself.

9. The following are the primary colors red, blue, and yellow.

10. Arriving on the 8 10 plane were Liz Brooks, my old roommate her husband and Tim, their son.

11. When the teacher commented that her spelling was poor, Lynn replied All the members of my family are poor spellers. Why not me?

12. He used the phrase you know so often that I finally said No, I don't know.

13. The automobile dealer handled three makes of cars Volkswagens, Porsches, and Mercedes Benz.

14. Though Phil said he would arrive on the 9 19 flight, he came instead on the 10 36 flight.

15. Whoever thought said Helen that Jack would be elected class president?

16. In baseball, a show boat is a man who shows off.

17. The minister quoted Isaiah 5 21 in last Sunday's sermon.

18. There was a very interesting article entitled The New Rage for Folk Singing in last Sunday's New York Times newspaper.

19. Whoever is elected secretary of the club Ashley, or Chandra, or Aisha must be prepared to do a great deal of work, said Jumita, the previous secretary.

20. Darwin's On the Origin of Species 1859 caused a great controversy when it appeared.

Exercise 4. Punctuate the following sentences with apostrophes according to the rules for using the apostrophe.

1. Whos the partys candidate for vice president this year?
2. The fox had its right foreleg caught securely in the traps jaws.
3. Our neighbours car is an old Chrysler, and its just about to fall apart.
4. In three weeks time well have to begin school again.
5. Didnt you hear that theyre leaving tomorrow?
6. Whenever I think of the stories I read as a child, I remember Cinderellas glass slipper and Snow Whites wicked stepmother.
7. We claimed the picnic table was ours, but the Smiths children looked so disappointed that we found another spot.
8. Its important that the kitten learns to find its way home.
9. She did not hear her childrens cries.
10. My address has three 7s, and Tims phone number has four 2s.

Exercise 5. Compare and contrast three punctuation marks in English and your mother tongue.

Capitalization and Abbreviations

- *The Rules of Capitalization*
- *The Rules of Abbreviations*
- *Words Associated with the Internet*
- *Capitonyms*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Identify the mistakes in the following sentences:

1. I listened to president Wilson on the radio last night.
2. can your mother speak good english?
3. she asked, "do you like german food ?"
4. " pirates of the caribbean ", he said, "is my favourite film."
5. "my friend was born on 25 december 1999. she doesn't like having her birthday on christmas day."
6. "i do like chinese food," mary said, "but i prefer french or italian."
7. los angeles, new york and chicago are the 3 largest american cities.
8. the teacher called Sarah's Dad about her low grades.
9. I'm running so late that I'm worried i will miss The Train.
10. the most commonly spoken language in the world is mandarin chinese.
11. the largest amusement resort in the world is disney world in central florida.
12. the fastest growing religion in the world is muslim.

- ***The Rules of Capitalization***

Basically, capitalization falls into two categories:

➢ All proper nouns are capitalised. These include names, geographical places, specific historical events, eras, and documents, languages, nationalities, countries, and races.

➢ The first word at the beginning of a sentence is capitalised.

In everyday writing, the rules are clear-cut. However, if one is writing within a specific organization or company, capitalization is mostly a matter of editorial style. The important goal is always the same: capital letters must be used consistently within a particular document.

Today, professional writers and editors tend to use fewer capital letters than was the habit in the past. In the nineteenth century and before, many more nouns were capitalized, as novels from this period reveal.

Let's look at these rules in detail. The proper nouns are divided into separate categories for ease of reference, starting with names and titles.

- ***Names and Titles are capitalised***

1. Each part of a person's name is capitalised.

E.g.: George W. Bush; Jennifer Aniston; Soupy Sales; Hillary Clinton.

- If a name begins with *d', de, du*, or *von*, the prefix is capitalised unless it is preceded by a first name or a title.

E.g.: Without a first name - *Du Pont Von Karman*

With a first name - *E. I. du Pont Theodore von Karman*;

- If a name begins with *Mc, O'*, or *St*., the next letter is capitalised as well.

E.g.: McManus, O'Neill, St. Claire

- If the name begins with *la* or *le*, the capitalization varies: *le Blanc* and *Le Blanc* are both correct, for example.
- The names of specific animals are capitalised.

E.g.: Lassie, Morris the cat;

- A personal name that is used as a common noun is no longer capitalized. These words are often used in science.

E.g.: curie, watt, newton, kelvin;

2. Titles used before a person's name are capitalised.

E.g.: President Bush; Chief Scientist Smithson; Dr. Frankenstein; Mr. Williams; Professor Chin;

There is a surprising number of titles. Here are some of the most common ones:

Religious titles: Bishop; Reverend; Father; Sister; Rabbi; Monsignor;

Military titles: Admiral; Colonel; Major; Sergeant; Lieutenant; General;

Elected officials: Mayor; Governor; President; Senator; Congressman; Congresswoman; Secretary; Ambassador;

Earned titles: Doctor; Professor; Provost; Dean;

Honorary titles: Sir; Lord; Lady; Madame;

- All the parts of a government officials post are capitalised.
- ***E.g.:*** Vice President, Lieutenant Governor
- Titles are capitalised to show respect.

E.g.: The Senator spoke to us at the ribbon cutting.

But: A senator's time is always in demand.

- Titles used in direct address are capitalised.

E.g.: Doctor, I have a pain in my side. Nurse, please bring me the bandage.

- The person's title is capitalised when it follows the name on the address or signature line. ***E.g.:*** *Sincerely, Ms. Haines, Chairperson*
- The titles of high-ranking government officials are capitalised when used before their names. The civil title is not capitalised if it is used instead of the name.

E.g.: *The president will address Congress.*

All senators are expected to attend.

But: *Governor Fortinbrass, Lieutenant Governor Poppins, Attorney General Dalloway, and Senators James and Twain will attend.*

3. Titles that show family relationships are capitalised when the title is used with a person's name or in direct address.

E.g.: Grandmother Pirandello came from Italy in the 1950s. Grandfather, will you take us to the zoo?

4. Titles of parents and relatives not preceded by a possessive word (such as *my*) are capitalised.

E.g.: We saw Mother kissing Santa Claus.

But: I saw my mother kissing my father.

5. Abbreviations that appear after a person's name are capitalised.

E.g.: Martin Luther King, Jr., Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D., Grace Lui, M.D.

6. The major words in titles of books, plays, films, newspapers, and magazines are capitalised.

- The articles are not capitalised: *a, an, the*;
- Prepositions are not capitalised: *at, by, for, of, in, up, on, so, on, to*, etc.
- Conjunctions are not capitalised: *and, as, but, if, or, nor*.

- Book titles are capitalised.

E.g.: Schaum's Quick Guide to Writing Great Research Papers

- Play titles are capitalised.

E.g.: She Stoops to Conquer; Cats.

- Film titles are capitalised.

E.g.: The Great Escape. From Here to Eternity.

- Newspaper titles are capitalised.

E.g.: The New York Times. The Washington Post.

- Magazine titles are capitalised.

E.g.: Sports Illustrated for Kids. Atlantic Monthly.

7. Acronyms are capitalised .

An acronym is an abbreviation formed from the first letter of each word in the title. A few words have entered English that were first acronyms but are now formed with lowercase letters, such as *laser* and *radar*. However, most acronyms are formed with capital letters.

Note: Since acronyms are used as words, they never take full stops.

E.g.: *NATO* (North Atlantic Treaty Organization);

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

- ***Names of Places and Events***

1. Names of geographical places and sections of the country are capitalised.

E.g.: Europe; Asia; the United States of America; Lake Superior; Yellowstone National Park.

2. A compass point is capitalised when it identifies a specific area of the country.

E.g.: We live in the South. The West is still wild and untamed.

3. A compass point is not capitalised when it refers to direction.

E.g.: The storm is coming from the south. Drive west 4 miles and turn left at the shopping centre.

4. The names of specific historical events, eras, and documents are capitalised.

E.g.: the Revolutionary War Reconstruction; the Declaration of Independence; the Gettysburg Address.

- ***Names of Languages and Religions***

1. The names of languages, nationalities, countries, and ethnic and racial identifications are capitalised.

Languages: French, German, Italian;

Nationalities: Japanese, Australian, Iranian;

Countries: Pakistan, India, Bosnia;

Ethnicities: African-American, Native American, South African.

2. Religions and references to the Supreme Being, including the pronouns referring to the Supreme Being, are capitalised:

- *Christianity, Hindu, Catholicism, Judaism*
- *the Creator, Him, He, Heaven, His name.*

The words *god* or *goddess* are not capitalised when they refer to ancient mythology: *the goddess Athena, the god Hermes.*

- ***Proper Adjectives and Product Names***

1. Proper adjectives formed from proper nouns are capitalised.

Proper Nouns: Italy, Rome, Alps, Newton;

Proper Adjectives: Italian, Roman, Alpine, Newtonian.

- In a hyphenated proper adjective, only the proper adjective is capitalised: *Spanish*-speaking residents
- The prefix attached to a proper adjective is not capitalised unless the prefix refers to a nationality: pro-English, Franco-Prussian War.

2. Brand names and trademarks are capitalised: *Jell-O pudding, Kleenex tissues, Freon, Band-Aid, Fresca, Xerox.*

- ***Names of Organizations, Institutions, Courses, and Famous Buildings***

Since names of organizations, institutions, courses, and famous buildings are all proper nouns, they are capitalized.

1. The names of organizations are capitalised.

E.g.: The Boy Scouts of America, Rotary International, The Red Cross, General Motors.

2. The names of institutions are capitalised.

E.g.: Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts, The United Nations.

3. The names of courses are capitalised when they are language courses or when they are followed by a number or if they are included in the name of the degree.

E.g.: James is studying a Bachelor of Engineering.

UTS offers a Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies**.**

Sociology 1, Mathematics 2.

4. The names of buildings are capitalised.

E.g.: The Empire State Building, the Sears Tower.

- ***Names of Days, Months, and Holidays***

These are all proper nouns, so they are all capitalized.

1. Names of days are capitalised.

E.g.: Monday, Tuesday.

2. Names of months are capitalised.

E.g.: February, March, April, July.

3. Names of holidays are capitalised.

E.g.: Thanksgiving, Easter, Christmas.

- ***Time and Other Proper Nouns***

1. Abbreviations for time are capitalised in American English and not capitalised in British English.

E.g.: 6:00 A.M./ a.m., 7:00 P.M./ p.m.

2. Names of celestial bodies, except the moon and the sun, are capitalised.

E.g.: the Milky Way, the Big Dipper.

The earth is capitalised only when it is used as a planet.

E.g.: The Earth is not flat.

3. Names of awards are capitalised.

E.g.: the Nobel Peace Prize, the Caldecott Medal.

4. The words *I* is capitalised.

E.g.: Quickly, I turned around.

- ***Capitalize the First Word of . . .***

1. A sentence

E.g.: The shortest presidential inaugural speech was George Washington's, at 135 words. The longest was by William Henry Harrison, at 8,445 words.

2. A complete sentence after a colon (in American English)

E.g.: Only two U.S. presidents and their wives are buried at Arlington National Cemetery: John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and William Taft and his wife Helen Heron Taft are buried there.

3. A quotation, if it is a complete sentence.

E.g.: The teacher said, "Abraham Lincoln lost eight elections for various offices before winning

the election in 1860."

but

"Abraham Lincoln lost eight elections for various offices," the teacher said, "before winning the election in 1860."

4. A line of poetry

E.g.: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

In poetry and old-fashioned novels, words are sometimes capitalized for emphasis. In this Shakespearean sonnet, for example, "Death" is capitalized to personify it: to make it seem like a living being. Today, however, words are capitalized for emphasis only in e-mail.

5. The greeting of a letter

E.g.: Dear Mr. Plotnick; To Whom It May Concern; Dear Mum.

6. The complimentary close of a letter. Notice that only the first word is capitalized, not subsequent words in a phrase.

E.g.: Best regards, Sincerely yours,
7. Each item in an outline
E.g.: A. Greek temples
8. Each item in a list
E.g.: This report is designed to:
1. Expand the data base
2. Evaluate data

- ***The Rules of Abbreviations***

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase. Abbreviations start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. They are a handy way to save time and space when writing, but only if commonly accepted abbreviations are used. Otherwise, their use will just confuse the readers. Some abbreviations do not take full stops: government agencies, for instance, such as the *SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission)* or the *GPO (Government Printing Office)*. If you are uncertain about whether a particular abbreviation requires a period, consult a dictionary or an appropriate manual of style. Not all abbreviations, incidentally, are allowable in composition. Some are perfectly acceptable: *SEC, GPO,* or *Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.* Others are not universally accepted. For example, many teachers prefer that instead of *&, i.e., etc.,* and *e.g.,* you write out *and, that is, and so on, for example*. Colloquial, slangy abbreviations are not acceptable at all: *econ* and *polysci* (*political sciences*) are legitimate enough in conversation, but you should use the full words in composition.

Here is how to use abbreviations correctly.

1. Social titles and titles of rank are abbreviated, both before and after a person's name: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr.

Miss is a title that comes before a person's name, but since it is not an abbreviation, it does not have a full stop at the end. A usage note: Many women now prefer the title "Ms.," but some still prefer "Miss." When in doubt, ask the woman what title she prefers.

2. Names of academic degrees are abbreviated.

E.g.: Jonathan Hernandez, B.A. (Bachelor of Arts); Hi-Jing Yu, M.F.A. (Master of Fine Arts)

Because of their Latin roots, abbreviations for many degrees can be written in either direction: M.A. or A.M. for Masters of Arts, for instance. The following are some of the most commonly abbreviated degrees:

Bachelor of Science - B.S.

Bachelor of Business Administration - B.B.A.

Masters of Arts - MA

Masters of Science - UK abbreviation MSc, US abbreviation MS

Masters of Business Administration - M.B.A.

Doctor of Medicine - M.D. terminal degree for physicians and surgeons

Doctor of Philosophy – PhD the highest college or university degree

Doctor of Divinity - D.D. the highest doctorate degree in divinity granted by universities

Doctor of Dental Surgery - D.D.S. a professional postgraduate degree of 4-years' duration

Registered Nurse - R.N.

3. Time is abbreviated: a.m./ A.M. (before noon; ante meridian); p.m./ P.M. (afternoon; post meridian)

4. Some historical periods are abbreviated . In most—but not all—cases, the abbreviation is placed after the date. The full stop is optional.

Ancient times (2,000 years in the past): B.C. (before the birth of Christ); B.C.E. (before the common era, used to show that a year or century comes before the year 1 of the calendar used in much of the world, esp. in Europe and North and South America);

Modern times (within the last 2,000 years): C.E. (common era); A.D. (Anno Domini, "in the year of the Lord," an abbreviation that comes before the date or after it)

Here is how these abbreviations are used:

E.g.: Emperor Augustus lived from 63 B.C. (or B.C.E.) to A.D. 14 (or C.E.).

5. Geographical terms are abbreviated.

E.g.:

Avenue - Ave.
Boulevard - Blvd.
Drive - Dr.
Fort - Ft.
Mountain - Mt.
Point - Pt.
Road - Rd.
Route - Rte.
Square - Sq.
Street - St.

6. Names of states are abbreviated.

E.g.: FL (Florida) PA (Pennsylvania)

7. Abbreviate some Latin expressions: e.g. (for example); et al. (and others)

8. Measurements are abbreviated. Inches is abbreviated in.; feet is abbreviated ft.

Here are some of the most common abbreviations for measurements. Note that metric abbreviations are not followed by a full stop.

yards - yd. 91.4 centimetres

- miles - mi. 5,280 feet or 1,760 yards (about 1,609 metres)
- teaspoon - tsp.
- tablespoon - tbs.
- ounce - oz. 28 grams
- pound - lb. 454 grams.
- pint - pt. half a litre

- kilograms - kg
- millimetres - mm
- litres – L or l

- centimetres - cm
- meters - m
- kilometres - km

- quart - qt. a unit of measurement for liquids, equal to approximately 1.14 litres in Britain, or 0.95 litres in the US:
- Fahrenheit - F. a measurement of temperature on a standard in which 32° is the temperature at which water freezes and 212° that at which it boils
- Celsius - C
- grams - g

9. The titles of some organizations and things are abbreviated.

These abbreviations are not followed by a full stop.

E.g.: UN (United Nations); FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation); TV (television).

- ***Words Associated with the Internet***

There is considerable debate, still, about how to capitalize words associated with the Internet. Most dictionaries are capitalizing Internet, Web, and associated words such as World Wide Web (usually shortened to Web), Web page, Web site, etc., but the publications of some corporations, such as Microsoft, seem to be leaning away from such capitalization. The words e-mail and online are not capitalized.

The most important guiding principle in all such matters is **consistency** within a document and consistency within an office or institution.

- ***Capitonyms***

In English, there are even a few words whose meaning (and sometimes pronunciation) varies with capitalization. A **capitonym** is a word that changes its meaning (and sometimes pronunciation) when it is capitalized.

Alpine: of or relating to the Alps

alpine: (adj.) relating to high mountains; living or growing in high mountains; (n.) an alpine plant

Arabic: of or relating to the Arabic language or Arabic literature

arabic: also called gum acacia, a food ingredient,

arabic numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) The so-called "arabic" numbers are really from India, but it was the Arabs who brought them to Europe.

August: the eighth month of the year

august: majestic or venerable

Boxing Day: 26 December

boxing: a sport
Earth: a planet
earth: the dry land of this planet
He: pronoun for God
he: pronoun for a male
Lent: the period between Ash Wednesday and Easter
lent: past tense and participle of *to lend*
March: the third month of the year
march: to walk briskly and rhythmically
May: the fifth month of the year
may: modal verb
Pole: a Polish person
pole: a long thin cylindrical object; various other meanings
Polish: from Poland
polish: to create a shiny surface by rubbing (verb); a compound used in that process (noun)
Turkey: a country in the Middle East
turkey: a bird, often raised for food

Exercises

Exercise 1. Are the following statements true or false? Correct the false ones.

1. Capitalize all proper nouns.
2. Capitalize proper names and names of geographical places, specific historical events, eras, documents, languages, nationalities, countries, and races.
3. Capitalize the first word at the beginning of a sentence.
4. It's not important to use capital letters consistently within a particular document.
5. Capitalize only the last part of a person's name.
6. If a name begins with d', de, or du, do not capitalize the prefix unless it is preceded by a first name or a title.
7. A person can always decide how to capitalize the words in his or her name.

8. Do not capitalize the names of any animals.

9. A personal name that is used as a common noun is capitalized, as in “Watt” and “Kelvin.”

10. Capitalize titles used before a person’s name.

Exercise 2. Circle the words in the following sentences that need a capital letter. There are 25.

1. my favourite books are green eggs and ham and horton hears a who.
2. on sunday, i will see the film star wars and eat at taco bell.
3. terry and louis went to central park last july.
4. she has a friend from london, england.
5. did you know that abraham lincoln was the sixteenth president?

Exercise 3. Circle all the words that need to be capitalized. There are 25.

i have the coolest book called encyclopaedia of the world. it shows pictures of africans, asians, animals, and architecture. it explains how the coliseum in greece was built and why the leaning tower of pisa leans. my dad likes reading about the war of the roses and the russian revolution. it also explains about different groups of people, like catholics, protestants, and jews. Also included is information about zoos, including the san diego zoo.

Exercise 4. Write the following sentences correctly.

1. every december, i can hardly wait for santa claus.
2. friday is the best day because we order pizza from domino’s.
3. the best television shows are spongebob and ed, edd, and eddie.
4. my favourite song is we will rock you.
5. king arthur ruled over camelot.

Exercise 5. Put an X if the sentence is capitalized incorrectly and a C if it is capitalized correctly.

_____ Big Ben of London is a clock.

_____ I drove east to the city and turned north.

_____ My family supports the American cancer society.

_____ Yellowstone National Park is a great Park.
_____ I work for the New York Times.
_____ She is a republican and proud of it.
_____ The Emancipation proclamation was issued in 1862.
_____ Buddhists have been around a very long time.
_____ The Sidney Opera House is a Gorgeous Building.
_____ The Bronze Age lasted for several thousand years.

Exercise 6. How are the rules of capitalisation in English similar or different to these rules in your mother tongue?

Exercise 7. Make a list of 20 abbreviations (you may use the abbreviations from the text) and find/ suggest their equivalents in your mother tongue.

Developing Your Own Writing Style

- *What is Style in Writing*
- *The Elements of Style*
- *Subject and Style*
- *Audience and Style*
- *Purpose and Style*
- *Developing Your Style*

- ***What is <u>Style</u> in Writing?***

In its broadest sense "style" is the total of all the choices a writer makes concerning words and their arrangements. In this sense style may be good or bad—good if the choices are appropriate to the writer's purpose, bad if they are not. More narrowly, "style" has a positive, approving sense, as when we say that someone has "style" or praise a writer for his or her "style." More narrowly yet, the word may also designate a particular way of writing, unique to a person or characteristic of a group or profession: "Hemingway's style," "an academic style."

We understand «style» to include many ways of writing, each appropriate for some purposes, less so for others. There is no one style, some ideal manner of writing at which all of us should aim. Style is flexible, capable of almost endless variation. But one thing style is not: it is not a superficial fanciness brushed over the basic ideas. Rather than the gilding, style is the deep essence of writing.

Consider the following three passages. As you read them, think about what qualities make them the same and different from each other.

<u>Passage 1</u>

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season

of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*)

Passage 2

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man must be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is to be let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"*You* want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it." (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*)

Passage 3

Simple everyday upkeep will help maintain the beauty of your new carpet. One important aspect of this care is cleaning up food and beverage spills quickly and correctly. Follow these steps:

1. Blot up as much of the spill as possible. Use a clean, white cloth or white paper towels. Try to work quickly so the liquid does not have time to penetrate the carpet.

2. If the carpet is stained, blot down with a cloth moistened with warm water. Do not use hot water; it will set the stain. Press down

firmly to remove as much liquid as you can. Do not rub the stain, because rubbing can change the texture of the carpet. Continue blotting with clean cloths or paper towels until the stain is gone.

3. If the stain does not disappear, mix 1 quart warm water with 1 teaspoon mild liquid laundry detergent. Do not use dishwashing detergent or any detergent that contains bleach. Cover the stain with the cleaner. Let it sit five minutes. Then blot up the liquid with clean white cloths or paper towels.

4. Rinse the stained area with warm water and blot until the carpet is almost dry. Cover the stain with a few layers of paper towels or cloths.

5. When the carpet is completely dry, vacuum the carpet. To restore the texture, you may then wish to brush the carpet gently.

6. Deep stains may need a professional stain remover. This can be obtained from your local hardware or carpet store. Follow the directions on the container. If you need additional assistance, call 800-555-CLEAN. (From a carpet care manual)

Passages 1 and 2 are similar because they are both parts of novels. As a result, they both tell a story. The authors aim to entertain their readers. Passage 3, in contrast, does not tell a story. Rather, it gives directions. As a result, its purpose is to instruct.

Now let us look a little deeper: Passage 1 has long sentences. Looking more closely, you can see that the entire passage is one single very long sentence! Dickens also uses parallel structure as he matches phrases and clauses. The words are elevated, too, as shown in his choice of the word *epoch,* for example. There is no dialogue, however.

Passage 2 also has long sentences, but they are nowhere near as long as the sentence Dickens uses. The diction is British, as shown in the word *let* used for *rented.* This passage is developed through dialogue.

Both passages are witty. There is no humour at all in Passage 3, however!

- ***The Elements of Style***

Writing style is the manner in which an author chooses to write to his or her audience. A style reveals both the writer's personality and voice, but it also shows how she or he perceives the audience, and chooses conceptual writing style which reveals those choices by which the writer may change the conceptual world of the overall character of the work. Different writers have their own distinctive way of writing. A writer's *style* is his or her distinctive way of writing. Style is a series of choices, shown as follows:

Element of Style	Examples
➢ Description	Words that appeal to the five senses
➢ Dialogue	Showing a character's exact words in quotation marks
➢ Figures of speech	Similes, metaphors, hyperbole
➢ Parallel structure	Matching words, phrases, and clauses
➢ Punctuation	Commas, semicolons, colons, dashes
➢ Purpose	To entertain, to instruct, to persuade, to explain
➢ Sentence length	Short sentences, middle-length sentences, long sentences
➢ Sentence structure	Questions, statements, exclamations, commands
➢ Tone	Humorous, sombre, serious, eerie, matter-of-fact
➢ Topic	Subject of the writing
➢ Voice	Author's stance toward the material
➢ Words	Slang, vernacular, everyday speech, elevated diction

Style can be described in many ways, including *formal, informal, stiff (rigidly formal), grand, allusive, elevated, academic, relaxed, heroic, ironic, colloquial, breezy (fresh and animated; lively), familiar, rich, serious, technical, sensory (connected with the physical senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight), abstract, plain,* and *ornate (language that is ornate contains too many complicated words or phrases).*

Some professional writers celebrated for their distinctive writing style include Jane Austen, Ernest Hemingway, Truman Capote, John McPhee, Tracy Kidder, and E. B. White. (Some criticized for their writing style include James Joyce, Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Charles Dickens!) All writers vary in their styles. Their sentences differ in length and complexity. Each individual tends to put the words together in particular patterns. Each writer's tone may be objective and distanced, or up-close and personal. Style involves all these choices and more. Style is the intangible essence of what makes a person's writing unique.

Writers may adapt different styles at different times in their writing careers. Other writers have specific traits that always set them apart. Fantasy writer Piers Anthony's style involves extensive use of puns. Faulkner's style involves long, rolling sentences and experimentation with compound words and so-called "stream of consciousness" narration. Hemingway's style has often been described as "gritty" (showing all the unpleasant but true details of a situation); it involves removal of commas and deadpan (impassively matter-of-fact) description of often-gruesome (very unpleasant or violent, usually involving injury or death) events. Hemingway often uses concise, staccato (marked by or composed of abrupt, disconnected parts or sounds) sentences with few authorial comments. Jane Austen's writing style has been called "dry"; it involves multisyllabic words and understated wit. Charles Dickens favours a Latinate vocabulary and long sentence structure; he often interrupts his narrative to directly address the reader in a personal aside.

Writers often change their style for different kinds of writing and to suit different audiences. In poetry, for example, an author might

use more imagery than he or she would use in prose. Dr. Seuss wrote whimsical (determined by, arising from, or marked by whim or caprice) (novels such as The Cat in the Hat for children, as well as effective advertisements for Burma Shave! E. B. White wrote the children's classics Charlotte's Web, Stuart Little, and The Trumpet of the Swan, as well as essays for adults collected under the title Is Sex Dead? The style of each publication is clearly different, yet each can be equally well written. As these examples show, writing style is first adjusted to satisfy your audience.These are tendencies--not absolute laws. Good writers vary their style as appropriate. The best writers can use one style or another to suit their purpose, rather than simply having a single style.

A clear writing style is not restricted to professional writers, however. Everyday people get ahead in part because of their ability to write clearly and effectively. For example,

- Accountants must write clear cover letters for audits.
- Computer specialists write proposals.
- Educators write observations of staff members and reports on students.
- Engineers write reports, e-mails, and faxes.
- Insurance brokers write letters soliciting business.
- Lawyers need to make their briefs logical.
- Marketing personnel do sales reports.
- Retail workers often write letters of recommendation and promotion.
- Stock and bond traders write letters and prospectuses.

Everyone writes CVs, cover letters, memos, faxes, and business letters. Therefore, we all need to develop an effective writing style that helps us get our point across clearly, concisely, and gracefully.

While everyone's writing style is as individual as his or her fingerprints, every writing style shares the same characteristics:

- It suits the tone to the readers. For example, a respectful tone will be used in a eulogy (funeral speech), but a humorous tone can be used in a speech at a birthday party.

- It is free of errors in grammar and usage (unless fragments are being used in dialogue).
- It is free of errors in spelling and punctuation (unless misspellings are being used in dialect).
- It does not include offensive words.

Unless you've been granted the gift of an exceptionally fluent tongue, writing as you talk usually results in awkward and repetitive documents. Most of us hesitate as we speak to allow us time to gather our thoughts. We also backtrack to pick up points we might have missed on the first go-round. As a result, a document written "by ear" usually sounds illogical.

- ***Subject and Style***

When you can select a subject for yourself, it ought to interest you, and interest others as well, at least potentially. It should be within the range of your experience and skill, though it is best if it stretches you. It ought to be neither so vast that no one person can encompass it nor so narrow and trivial that no one cares. Don't be afraid to express your own opinions and feelings. You are a vital part of the subject. No matter what the topic, you are really writing about how you understand it, how you feel about it. Good writing has personality. Readers enjoy sensing a mind at work, hearing a clear voice, responding to an unusual sensibility. If you have chosen a topic that is of general concern, and if genuine feeling and intelligence come through, you will be interesting. Interest lies not so much in a topic as in what a writer has made of it.

- ***Audience and Style***

A writer's *audience* are the people who read what he or she has written. To be an effective writer and speaker, one must understand how the *audience* is likely to react to what he or she says and how she or he says it. Knowing *who* the writer is communicating with is fundamental to the success of any message. The one who writes needs to tailor the writing style to suit the audience's needs, interests, and

goals. Ask yourself questions about your readers: What can I expect them to know and not know? What do they believe and value? How do I want to affect them by what I say? What attitudes and claims will meet with their approval? What will offend them? What objections may they have to my ideas, and how can I anticipate and counter those objections?

Before writing anything that will be shared with others, the audience must be analysed. These questions will be a good guide:

1. Who will be reading what I have written?

Possible audiences include teachers, classmates, colleagues, clients, friends, strangers.

2. How much do my readers know about my topic at this point?

Are they novices, experts, or somewhere in between?

3. What information must I provide for my message to be successful?

Sometimes the writer will have to provide a great deal of information to help the readers grasp the message. Other times, in contrast, he or she will have little, or no, information to add.

4. How does my audience feel about this topic?

Are they neutral, hostile, enthusiastic, or somewhere in between? A hostile audience is much more difficult to reach than a friendly one.

5. What obstacles (if any) must I overcome for my message to be successful?

The writer might have to deliver bad news, for instance.

6. What style of writing does my audience anticipate and prefer?

Of course, the writer will suit his or her style to the audience's needs and expectations. For instance, long, difficult words for young children will not be used. Similarly, the usage of many idioms (non-literal phrases) for non-native speakers of English will be avoided.

In most instances, the writer will have a clearly defined audience, so he or she can adjust the style to appeal to them and help achieve the purpose. Other times, however, the audience will not be as easy to identify. For instance, one might be sending a CV and cover letter to a job identified by only the most general description and a post office

box. In this situation, it is even more critical to get some information about the readers. One might first send a query letter asking for more details, for instance.

- ***Purpose and Style***

A love letter. A business memo. A short story. A poem. An inventory. A letter to a company explaining a problem with delivery.

Although each of these documents seems very different, they are alike in one crucial way: they each have a clear purpose. *Keeping the purpose in mind as one writes helps to craft a clear and appropriate style.*

Writers have four main purposes:

- to explain (exposition)
- to convince (persuasion)
- to describe (description)
- to tell a story (narration)

Exposition is constructed logically. It organizes around cause/effect, true/false, less/more, positive/ negative, general/particular, assertion/ denial. Its movement is signalled by connectives like *therefore, however, and so, besides, but, not only, more important, in fact, for example*.

Persuasion seeks to alter how readers think or believe. It is usually about controversial topics and often appeals to reason in the form of argument, offering evidence or logical proof. Another form of persuasion is satire, which ridicules folly or evil, sometimes subtly, sometimes crudely and coarsely. Finally, persuasion may be in the form of eloquence, appealing to ideals and noble sentiments.

Description deals with perceptions—most commonly visual perceptions. Its central problem is to arrange what we see into a significant pattern. Unlike the logic of exposition, the pattern is spatial: *above/below, before/behind, right/left,* and so on.

The subject of *narration* is a series of related events—a story. Its problem is twofold: to arrange the events in a sequence of time and to reveal their significance.

The following chart explains purpose in writing.

Purpose	Definition	Examples
Exposition	To explain To show To tell	Manuals News stories Recipes Press releases Business letters Reports Term papers Wills Textbooks Articles
Persuasion	To convince	Critical reviews Editorials CVs Cover letters Job evaluations Letters of recommendation Letters to the editor Letters of complaint Speeches
Description	To describe	Poems Journals
Narration	To tell a story	Autobiographies Biographies Anecdotes Oral histories Short stories Novels

A document often has more than one purpose, but one purpose usually dominates. For example, a letter of complaint will describe, explain, and persuade. However, its primary purpose is to persuade, as you try to convince your audience to make redress.

- ***Developing Your Style***

Style is made up of many elements. These include sentences, especially their length and structure. Style is also created by description, repetition, voice, parallel structure, and punctuation.

1. Style and sentences

Let's look at these stylistic elements in greater detail.

- Suit the sentence length to the topic. When the topic is complicated or full of numbers, short, simple sentences will be used to aid understanding. When the topic is less complex, longer sentences with subordination can be used to show how ideas are linked together and to avoid repetition.
- Clear writing uses sentences of different lengths and types to create variety and interest. Create the sentences to express the ideas in the best possible way. S*imple, compound, complex,* and *compound-complex* sentences may be mixed for a more effective style.
- Overall, the length of your sentences must be varied. The unbroken rhythm of monotonous sentence length creates a dull style.
- The subject of each sentence will be selected based on what the writer wants to emphasize. Since readers focus on the subject of the sentence, it must be made the most important aspect of each thought.

2. Style and description

- Adjectives and adverbs will be added to a sentence (when suitable) for emphasis and variety. Sentences will be expanded with adjectives and adverbs. When the writer wants to avoid a very brief sentence, modifiers will be added. The decision to expand a sentence will be based on its focus and how it works in the context of surrounding sentences.
- Verbs rather than nouns will be used to communicate your ideas. This makes the writing more forceful and less wordy. For example, the forms of *to be* may be replaced with action verbs, as the following example shows:

Weak: The advantages of shopping ahead *is* saving time and money.

Improved: Shopping ahead *will save* you time and money.

There will be times when you'll have to use "big words," especially if they are technical terms or necessary jargon. Much of the time, however, big words just set up barriers between you and your audience. Instead, always choose words that suit your purpose and audience.

3. Style and repetition

Key words or ideas must be repeated to achieve emphasis. However, only the words that contain a main idea or that use rhythm to focus attention on a main idea will be repeated. Repetition is a key element in many of our most famous speeches, such as John F. Kennedy's inaugural address. Kennedy used repetition to capture the cadences of natural speech to create one of the most memorable lines of the twentieth century: "*And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country*."

4. Style and voice

- The active voice, not the passive voice, will be preferred (especially in cases one needs to persuade).
- In informal writing, the pronoun *you* will be used to engage the readers. The second-person pronoun *you* (rather than the third-person *he, she, one*) gives the writing more impact because it directly addresses the reader, as this example shows:

Weak: Deductions from *one's* account will be posted on the first of the month.

Improved: Deductions from *your* account will be posted on the first of the month.

5. Style and punctuation

The choice of punctuation also has a critical influence on the writing style because it determines the degree of linkage between sentences. Further, it suggests whether sentence elements are coordinating or subordinating.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Are the following statements true or false? Correct the false ones.

1. Style is found only in fiction such as novels and short stories; non-fiction writing does not have a distinctive style.

2. Only professional writers can develop a clear and distinctive writing style.

3. People in all walks of life can get ahead in part because of their ability to write clearly and effectively.

4. The ability to write well is something you are born with, like being right- or left-handed.

5. Everyone's writing style is as individual as his or her fingerprints, but every writing style shares many of the same characteristics.

6. In poetry, a writer might use more imagery than he or she would use in prose.

7. As a general rule, you should write just as you speak.

8. You need to adapt your writing style to suit the readers' needs, interests, and goals.

9. Before you write anything that you wish to share with others, analyze your audience.

10. A writing rarely has more than one purpose, and the purpose is always clear and obvious.

11. Suit your sentence length to your topic; for example, when your topic is complicated or full of numbers, use short, simple sentences to aid understanding.

12. Use nouns rather than verbs to communicate your ideas.

13. Repeat key words or ideas to achieve emphasis.

14. However, only repeat the words that contain a main idea or that use rhythm to focus attention on a main idea.

15. When it comes to creating an effective and distinctive writing style, punctuation does not matter a great deal.

Exercise 2. Select the word that best completes each sentence.

1. A writer's *style* is his or her distinctive way of (thinking, writing).

2. All good writing is clear and (correct, perfect).

3. Writers often change their style for different kinds of writing and to suit different (readers, moods).

4. A writer's (*diction, audience*) are the people who read what he or she has written.

5. Keeping your purpose in mind as you write helps you craft a clear and appropriate (audience, style).

6. Expository writing (convinces readers, explains a topic).

7. Narrative writing (tells a story, proves a point).

8. Use a semicolon and a conjunctive (adverb, adjective)—a word such as *nevertheless* or *however*—to show the relationship between ideas.

9. (Effective, Confusing) writing uses sentences of different lengths and types to create variety and interest.

10. Select the (subject, predicate) of each sentence based on what you want to emphasize.

11. Unless you want to avoid assigning blame or you do not know the subject of a sentence, use the (active, passive) voice rather than the (active, passive) voice.

12. When writing informally, use the pronoun (*one, you*) to engage your readers.

13. Your choice of (modifiers, punctuation) also has a critical influence on your writing style because it determines the degree of linkage between sentences.

14. Use a (comma, semicolon) if you wish to show that the second sentence completes the content of the first sentence.

Exercise 3. Describe the style in each passage. **Identify the subject, purpose and audience of each text. Also, point out the elements of style. Justify your answer with examples from the text.**

1. I have enjoyed my membership at the fitness centre for the past two years, but I have recently avoided the spa because it is so unpleasant. The shower room is especially bad. The floors have become grimy and littered with paper towels and partially used bars of soap. The non-slip mats between the stalls are disintegrating. It simply does not look or feel clean anymore.

I would like to retain membership in the centre, but I also want to get good value for my money. I hope these conditions can be improved for the benefit of all concerned.

I look forward to hearing from you within the next fortnight.

Yours sincerely

2. What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither a European nor the descendent of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons now have four wives of different nations. *He* is an American who, leaving behind all his ancient prejudices and manners, received new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new ranks he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the East; they will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which thereafter become distinct by the power of different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein he or his forefathers were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour; his labour is founded on the basis of nature, self-interest; can it want a stronger allurement? . . . The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions. (Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, "What is an American?")

3. My name is David. I am applying for the vacancy of the JUNIOR NETWORK PROGRAMMER which you advertised on the Employment Web Page of April 23rd.

I hold a bachelor's degree with a major in Economics which was awarded to me by Fu-Jen University in Taipei in 1997. Although I am

a novice in the workforce, I am qualified for this position according to the requirements which were described in your advertisement. First, I have good command of English, because my university minor subject was English. Moreover, my TEFL test scores were 600. These two facts provide the evidence that I have a quite adequate command of English to work in an international company like yours.

Second, although computer science is not my major subject at the university, the courses I have taken like Data Management, C-Language and Calculus have prepared me for software programming in the field of finance and investment. My grades in these three courses were all above 80. In addition to my computer programming, I was employed at the university's computer centre where I assisted the instructors in teaching students how to search web sites on the internet, and how to send e-mail messages by using Outlook software. Moreover, I helped students design their web page by familiarizing them with both PowerPoint and Front Page software.

Third, I was not only active in the university but also a participant in a 1998 International Conference of Web Technology Development in Taiwan. The experience brought me into contact with professional societies and helped me improve my social skills when interacting and communicating with professional people. This experience also taught me how to work with people efficiently.

As far as my private life is concerned, I am from a middle-class nuclear family which is composed of four members: my parents, my younger sister and I. My father is a businessman who deals with international trade. My mother used to work in a bank, but she retired recently. My sister studies nursing and she is going to work in a hospital. My family life is calm and steady. My parents love their children and hold great expectation that their children can establish their own career independently and live a happy life. Fortunately, up to now I have not disappointed them. I have completed my required military service as an air force sergeant. My hobbies include films, music and sports. I am an enthusiastic, initiative and interesting person although I can be straightforward and not very prudent in complicated situations. However, I learn from experience quickly.

Diction and Conciseness

- *What is Diction?*
- *Levels of Diction*
- *Choosing the Appropriate Level of Diction*
- *Less Is More: Be Concise*
- *Three Ways to Write Concise Sentences*

- ***What is Diction?***

➢ *Ms Jessica Simpson is a talented singer and actress, and she has used her aptitudes and eminence to aid her in her humanitarian efforts. Her philanthropic work often pertains to social issues such as homelessness and domestic violence. I had the great honour and privilege of meeting Ms Simpson in New York City. It was clear from her friendly demeanour that she has not been corrupted by her status as a celebrity. Instead, she is an inspirational force in the lives of many young women. She projects an inner beauty in addition to her stunning and strong physical features.*

➢ *September 15, 2010 was an unforgettable day, one that has made a significant impact on my life. It was the day that I had the opportunity to meet Jessica Simpson, a woman I greatly admire for her inspirational achievements. Meeting Ms Simpson made me feel like a true New Yorker because if I didn't live in New York City, it would not have been possible.*

➢ *September 15, 2010 will never be forgotten in my brain. I cannot wait for another chance to meet the totally awesome Jessica Simpson. She is looked up to by many, young and old. Meeting her really made me feel as if I am a true New Yorker. I would have never been able to do that if I didn't live in New York City. It was unforgettable! I told her that I was the biggest fan and crazy in love with her. She is drop dead gorgeous, and I want to be just like that girl!*

These three selections are very different because of their words. In all forms of literature – nonfiction, fiction, poetry and drama – authors choose particular words to convey effect and meaning to the reader. Writers employ diction, or word choice, to communicate ideas and impressions, to evoke emotions and to convey their view of truth to the reader.

According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* diction is a writer's choice of words. Since words have specific meanings, and since one's choice of words can affect feelings, a writer's choice of words can have great impact in a written work. Diction affects the clarity and impact of the message. Therefore, the diction in a specific writing situation depends on context: audience, purpose, and tone. The word choice a writer makes determines the reader's reaction to the object of description, and contributes to the author's style and tone.

Language is the primary conductor between the brain and the minds of the audience. Ineffective language weakens and distorts ideas. If a writer wants to be understood, and his/her ideas to spread, using effective language must be the top priority of every person involved in the process of writing, regardless of which functional style the written text belongs to. In the modern world of business and politics this is hardly ever the case. In many instances, imprecise language is used intentionally to avoid taking a position and offending various demographics.

- ***Levels of Diction***

Levels of usage refer to the kind of situation in which a word is normally used. Most words suit all occasions. Some, however, are restricted to formal, literary contexts, and others to informal, colloquial ones. Consider three verbs which roughly mean the same thing: *exacerbate, annoy, bug*. Talking among your friends, you would not be likely to say, "*That person really exacerbated me*." On the other hand, describing a historical episode you wouldn't write, "*The Spartan demands bugged the Athenians*." But you could use

annoy on both occasions, without arousing derision in either friends or readers of your work. The three words differ considerably in their levels of usage. *Exacerbate* is a literary word, appropriate to formal occasions. *Bug* (in this sense) is a colloquial, even slang, term appropriate to speech and very informal writing. *Annoy* is an all-purpose word, suitable for any occasion.

Further, there are some other examples of synonyms that belong to different levels of diction:

Formal	**Standard**	**Informal**
edify optate beguile	learn choose mislead	wise up pick out jerk your chain

Diction is measured from *formal* to *informal* language usage. *Formal diction* is marked by multi-syllable words, long sentences, and a formal tone; *informal diction* includes shorter words and sentences and a less formal tone. Neither level of diction (or any levels in between) is "good" or "bad"; rather, each is appropriate in different writing situations. Any of the four generally accepted levels of diction—formal, informal, colloquial, or slang—may be correct in a particular context but incorrect in another or when mixed unintentionally. The following chart shows the levels of diction and when each is used.

Formal Diction	*Less Formal/Standard Diction*	*Informal Diction*
Multi-syllable words	Educated language	Everyday words
Legal documents	Job application letters	Magazine articles
Technical reports	CVs	Notes to friends
Scientific articles	Sales and marketing letters	Everyday e-mails

1. Elevated diction

The most elevated level of diction has abstract language, a serious tone, few personal references, few contractions, and considerable distance implied between reader and writer. It is used for the most formal documents such as stock offerings, land deeds, formal sermons, and technical articles.

The following selection is from Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," delivered in the early eighteenth century. The words are part of an educated person's vocabulary. Examples of *elevated diction* include *wrath* (great anger), *inconceivable* (cannot be imagined), and *abhor* (detest). There are many *figures of speech,* such as the two imaginative comparisons. The first, a metaphor, compares God's anger to a bow and arrow: "The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart and strains the bow. . . ." The second, a simile, compares humans to spiders: "The God that holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect . . ."

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when once it is let loose. 'Tis true that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand

times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath toward you burns like fire. . . .

2. Standard English

The language used in most academic and professional writing is called "Edited English" or "Standard Written English." Such language conforms to the widely established rules of grammar, sentence structure, usage, punctuation, and spelling. During the 18th and 19th centuries, publishers and educationalists defined a set of grammatical and lexical features which they regarded as correct, and the variety characterized by these features later came to be known as *Standard English*. Since English had, by the 19th century, two centres, Standard English came to exist in two varieties: British and US. These were widely different in pronunciation, very close in grammar, and characterized by small but noticeable differences in spelling and vocabulary. There were thus two more or less equally valid varieties of Standard English - British Standard and US Standard. . . . "It is important to realize that standard English is in no way intrinsically superior to any other variety of English: in particular, it is not 'more logical,' 'more grammatical,' or 'more expressive.' It is, at bottom, a convenience: the use of a single agreed standard form, learned by speakers everywhere, minimizes uncertainty, confusion, misunderstanding and communicative difficulty generally." (R.L. Trask, *Dictionary of English Grammar*. Penguin, 2000)

3. Colloquial language

Next comes *colloquial language,* the level of diction characteristic of casual conversation and informal writing. The following joke

shows the difference between standard diction and colloquial language. Notice the contractions and the use of the word *buddies.*

Three buddies die in a car crash and go to heaven for orientation. They're all asked, "When you're in your casket and friends and family are mourning you, what would you like to hear them say about you?"

The first guy says, "I'd like to hear them say that I was a great doctor and a great family man."

The second guy says, "I'd like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and teacher who made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow."

The last guy replies, "I'd like to hear them say . . . 'Look, he's moving!'"

Other frequently examples of colloquial language are the following:

1. *I'm* ***gonna*** *go down to the beach.* ***You wanna*** *come?*

I am going to go down to the beach. Do you want to come?

2. ***Ain't*** *that strange*?

Isn't that strange?

3. ***Ain't*** *these* ***doo whoppers*** *unusual?*

Aren't these things unusual?

4. *I* ***dunno*** *where* ***we're*** *meeting up tomorrow.*

I *don't know* where *we're* meeting tomorrow.

I do not know where we are meeting tomorrow.

5. Danny was **as tough as nails.** Danny was very tough.

4. Slang

Less formal than colloquial language is *slang,* coined words and phrases or new meanings for established terms. Slang words depend on the language used, country or area, ethnic background, subculture, and specific occupation or part of society - in other words, everyone has their own slang. Some recent slang includes the words *dweeb (*someone who is weak, slightly strange, and not popular or fashionable), *nerd (*someone who seems only interested in computers and other technical things)*, doofus (*incompetent, foolish, or stupid

person). Slang is fun, informal, and great for casual conversations with friends. Slang is never used in formal writing.

Some common British slang terms that would be recognized across the country include:

- ✓ Bobby - police officer
- ✓ Dosh, Ackers - money
- ✓ Good Egg/ Bad Egg - moral person/immoral person
- ✓ Bloke, Chap - man
- ✓ Mad - insane
- ✓ Chuffed - pleased, happy
- ✓ Bags - claiming something because you are first to say so
- ✓ Whinge - to complain or whine
- ✓ Pissed - drunk
- ✓ Spud - potato
- ✓ Fag - cigarette
- ✓ Quid- pound money
- ✓ Bird - girl

5. Vernacular

Vernacular is the form of a language that a regional or other group of speakers use naturally, especially in informal situations. It is the native language or native dialect of a specific population, as opposed to a language of wider communication that is a second language or foreign language to the population, such as a national language, standard language, or lingua franca. *Dialect,* the language specific to a particular regional area or social class, is a type of vernacular. It is different from slang because dialect reflects differences in regions and socioeconomic status. Like colloquial language and slang, vernacular and dialect are not appropriate for formal writing.

Here is how the novelist and humourist Mark Twain used vernacular and dialect to describe the people and events in the American West in the 1880s. This excerpt is from Twain's *Life on the Mississippi.*

"Say, Jim, I'm a-goin' home for a few days."

"What for?"

"Well, I hain't b'en there for a right smart while and I'd like to see who things are comin' on."

"How long are you going to be gone?"

"'Bout two weeks."

Some other examples of vernacular used by Mark Twain are the following:

1. 'feller' instead of 'fellow.'
2. 'solittry' instead of 'solitary.'
3. 'anywheres' instead of 'anywhere.'
5. 'dangdest' slang expressing annoyance or dislike.

- ***Choosing the Appropriate Level of Diction***

Here are some guidelines that will help to select the corresponding level of diction:

1. Words that are accurate, suitable, and familiar will be used.

_ *Accurate* words say what one means.

_ *Suitable* words convey the tone and fit with the other words in one's writing.

_ *Familiar* words are easy to read and understand.

2. The precise word will be chosen.

English is one of the richest languages in the world, one that offers many different ways to say the same thing. Words must be selected carefully to convey the thoughts vividly and precisely. Words with the precise meanings must be selected. For example, *blissful, blithe, cheerful, contented, gay, joyful,* and *gladdened* all mean "happy"—yet each one conveys a different shade of meaning.

3. Specific rather than general words will be used.

Specific words give readers more vivid mental pictures than general words. Sometimes simple action verbs such as *run* and *go* will be appropriate to the subject, audience, and tone. Other times, however, more specific words will be necessary to make the meaning clear.

4. Words with the appropriate connotations will be chosen.

To be successful at choosing exact words for each particular

context, the *denotation* and *connotation* of words will be considered. Every word has a *denotation,* its explicit meaning. The denotation of a word can be found by looking it up in a dictionary. For example, the word *fat* in the dictionary will have the following explanation: "weighing too much because you have too much flesh on your body." Some words also have *connotations,* or emotional overtones. These connotations can be positive, negative, or neutral. For example, *fat* has a negative connotation in our fitness-obsessed society. Being sensitive to a word's denotation and connotation is essential for clear and effective writing. It can also help to use the right word and so avoid insulting someone. Finally, these connotations can be used to create—or defuse—an emotional response in the reader.

Here are some additional examples of connotation and denotation:

Word	Positive Connotation	Negative Connotation
average	traditional	mediocre, passable
thrifty	economical	cheap, tight- fisted
agreeable	amiable, easy-going	servile
caring	concerned	prying, meddlesome
daring	bold	defiant, reckless
deliberate	careful	slow
talkative	loquacious	verbose

- ***Less Is More: Be Concise***

Here's a piece of writing advice from a letter Mark Twain wrote to a student named D.W. Bowser: "I notice that you use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences. That is the way to write English--it is the modern way and the best way. Stick to it; don't let fluff and flowers and verbosity creep in. When you catch an adjective, kill it. No, I don't mean utterly, but kill most of them--then the rest will be valuable. They weaken when they are close together. They give strength when they are wide apart. An adjective habit, or

a wordy, diffuse, flowery habit, once fastened upon a person, is as hard to get rid of as any other vice." (Mark Twain, Letter to D. W. Bowser, March 1880).

His words still ring true. Readers can benefit from plain language and clear sentences. We tend to get carried away describing our activity, products and services, but adjectives often distract from what we are trying to say. Twain's note is a reminder to get to the point and eliminate fluff during the proofreading process. Before submitting your work, ask yourself: Is every word meaningful? Are the sentences concise? Is the message clear?

Words like "really" and "very" are rarely useful. Twain famously said to "substitute 'damn' every time you are inclined to write 'very;' your editor or teacher will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be

The Elements of Style by William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White is probably the most famous writing book of our time. This slender little volume contains this advice: *omit needless words*. "Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell" (The Elements of Style by William Strunk, Jr.).

An effective writing style shows an economy of language. When needless words are omitted, *redundancy* is omitted — the unnecessary repetition of words and ideas. Wordy writing forces the readers to clear away unnecessary words and phrases before they can understand the message.

Here are some redundant phrases and their concise revisions:

Redundant	Concise
at this point in time	now
fatally killed	killed
foreign imports	imports
live and breathe	live
most unique	unique
proceed ahead	proceed
revert back	revert
successfully escaped	escaped
true facts	facts (or truth)
at the present time	now
because of the fact that	because
completely surrounded on all sides	surrounded
due to the fact that	because
experience some discomfort	hurt
for the purpose of	for
free up some space	make room
in the event that	if
in order to utilize	to use
in order to	to
in view of the fact that	because
is an example of	is
it is believed by many that	many believe
making an effort to	trying to
my personal physician	my doctor
reiterated over and over again	repeated
thunderstorm activity	thunderstorm
until such time as	until
weather event	snow (rain, etc.)
12 midnight	midnight
12 noon	noon
3 am in the morning	3 am
in spite of the fact that	although
personally, I think/feel	I think/feel
personal opinion	opinion
summarize briefly	summarize
advance forward	advance
advance planning	planning

Conciseness describes writing that is direct and to the point. This is not to say that one has to pare away (to reduce) all description, figures of speech, and images. No. Rather, it *is* to say that wordy writing annoys the readers because it forces them to slash their way through the sentences before they can understand what is written. Writing concise and effective sentences requires far more effort than writing verbose and confusing sentences. Fortunately, the readers will appreciate the writer's efforts.

- ***Three Ways to Write Concise Sentences***

The following rules will help to create succinct, effective sentences.

1. Unneeded words and phrases must be eliminated.
2. Sentences that repeat information must be combined.
3. The same thing will not be said twice.

Let's look at each of these rules more closely.

1. Unneeded words and phrases must be eliminated.

Filler words are empty words and phrases that add nothing to the sentences. Filler words are used to fill space and make writing sound "official." Unfortunately, many filler words have become so commonplace that we accept them as part of an effective style. Since they are not good writing, it is important to cut them from the documents. Filler words come in different parts of speech, as the following chart shows.

Part of Speech	Sample Filler Words
Adjectives	main, excellent, good, major, nice
Adverbs	basically, central, major, quite, really, very, in fact, due to the fact that, in the process of
Noun	area, aspect, case, character, element, factor, field, kind, nature, quality, scope, situation, sort, thing, type

Here's how filler words look in context:

Wordy: *Harris took a relaxing type of vacation*.

Better: *Harris took a relaxing vacation*.

Wordy: *His comment was of an offensive nature.*

Better: *His comment was offensive*.

Wordy: Work crews arrived *for the purpose of* digging new power lines.

Better: *Work crews arrived to dig new power lines*.

Wordy: Regardless of the fact that a thunderstorm activity is not predicted for tomorrow, *in view of the fact that* it is cloudy, you should take your umbrella *anyway.*

Better: Although a thunderstorm is not predicted for tomorrow, because it is cloudy, you should take your umbrella.

Wordy: *In the event that we do have a weather event,* you will be prepared *in a very real sense.*

Better: *If it does rain, you will be prepared*.

These phrases will be eliminated as well: *the point I am trying to make, as a matter of fact, in a very real sense, in the case of, that is to say, to get to the point, what I mean to say, in fact.*

2. Sentences that repeat information must be combined.

Sentences can be combined to achieve clarity. First, look for sentences that contain the same information or relate to the same ideas and so logically belong together. Then combine the related sentences. Finally, cut any words that just take up space and add nothing to the meaning. Here are some examples

Wordy: Mr. Drucker gave his students the assignment of a math problem. The problem called for adding a series of numbers. The numbers contained real and imaginary integers.

Better: Mr. Drucker assigned his students a math problem that called for adding real and imaginary integers.

Wordy: There is strong evidence to suggest that there is only one difference between highly successful people and the rest of us. It is highly successful people who apply themselves with determination to a task.

Better: Evidence suggests that the only difference between highly successful people and the rest of us is their ability to apply themselves with determination to a task.

3. The same thing will not be said twice.

Phrases such as "cover over," "circle around," and "square in shape" are redundant—they say the same thing twice.

Wordy: We hope *and trust* that you show insight *and vision* because it is fitting *and proper* that you do so.

Better: We hope that you show insight because it is fitting that you do so.

Wordy: I am *completely* upset by the extremely dangerous situation, and, *in light* of the fact that I think this is basically a terrible tragedy, I am not sure what the *eventual* outcome will be.

Better: I am upset by the dangerous situation; since this is a tragedy, I am not sure what the outcome will be.

Wordy: We watched the *big,* massive, *dark* black cloud rising *up* from the *level* prairie and covering *over* the sun.

Better: We watched the massive black cloud rising from the prairie and covering the sun.

Wordy: The package, rectangular *in shape,* was on the counter.

Better: The rectangular package was on the counter.

Exercises

Exercise 1. Are the following statements true or false? Correct the false ones.

1. Neither formal nor informal diction (or any levels in between) is "good" or "bad"; rather, each is appropriate in different writing situations.

2. *Colloquial language* is the level of diction characteristic of casual conversation and informal writing.

3. More formal than colloquial language is *slang,* coined words and phrases or new meanings for established terms.

4. Like colloquial language and slang, *vernacular* and *dialect* are very appropriate for formal writing.

5. *Familiar* words are easy to read and understand, which makes them a good choice for most everyday writing that you do.

6. Use *general* rather than *specific* words to convey your meaning accurately.

7. Some words also have *connotations,* or emotional overtones.

8. A word's connotations can be positive but are rarely negative or neutral.

9. As a general rule, effective writing style shows an economy of language.

10. The phrase "at this point in time" is redundant.

Exercise 2. Revise these sentences to state their meaning in fewer words. Avoid passive voice, needless repetition, and wordy phrases and clauses.

1. He dropped out of school on account of the fact that it was necessary for him to help support his family.

2. There are many ways in which a student who is interested in meeting foreign students may come to know one.

3. It is very unusual to find someone who has never told a deliberate lie on purpose.

4. Trouble is caused when people disobey rules that have been established for the safety of all.

5. A campus rally was attended by more than a thousand students. Five students were arrested by campus police for disorderly conduct, while several others are charged by campus administrators with organizing a public meeting without being issued a permit to do so.

6. The subjects that are considered most important by students are those that have been shown to be useful to them after graduation.

7. In the not too distant future, college freshmen must all become aware of the fact that there is a need for them to make contact with an academic adviser concerning the matter of a major.

8. In our company there are wide-open opportunities for professional growth with a company that enjoys an enviable record for stability in the dynamic atmosphere of aerospace technology.

Exercise 3. Combine each sentence group into one concise sentence.

1. The cliff dropped to reefs seventy-five feet below. The reefs below the steep cliff were barely visible through the fog.

2. Their car is gassed up. It is ready for the long drive. The drive will take all night.

3. Sometimes Stan went running with Blanche. She was a good athlete. She was on the track team at school.

4. Taylor brought some candy back from Europe. It wasn't shaped like American candy. The candy tasted somewhat strange to him.

5. Government leaders like to mention the creation of new jobs. They claim that these new jobs indicate a strong economy. They don't mention that low-wage jobs without benefits and security have replaced many good jobs.

Exercise 4. In the following sentences underline the redundant expression, and then revise the sentences to eliminate redundancy.

1. Her handbag was square in shape.

2. Detectives search for the true facts in an investigation.

3. The consensus of opinion on the basic fundamentals created the shortest meeting of the year.

4. If you refer back to the day of March 18 at eight o'clock in the morning, you will recall seeing a woman wearing a dress that was red in colour gather together her belongings before crossing the street.

5. Even though she had performed the operation a numerous number of times, she still reviewed the basic essentials each and every day.

6. The first priority appears to be to group together the children that live in close proximity to one another.

7.The local residents filled to capacity the new auditorium as they waited to hear the developer recount the past history of the archaeological site.

8. Advance planning can avoid total destruction of a historical site.

9. Fruit at Winn Dixie may possibly be cheaper in cost than fruit at Publix, but nevertheless it is of poorer quality.

10. In my personal opinion, we should refer back to last year's budget to see how we postponed that expenditure until a later time.

11. Physical aerobic exercise is recommended for healthy hearts.

12. Conrad sold houses in a large 600-acre housing development.

13. Modern antiques that have been made recently have been offered at high prices.

14. Last of all, I would like to completely finish this exercise before I go to bed.

15. Although my future plans are uncertain, I intend to adhere to my basic and fundamental belief that humans were meant to be lazy.

Exercise 5. What is your opinion of Mark Twain's and William Strunk's recommendations for writing concisely and effectively in English? Write a list of guidelines based on what you have read in this lecture on writing concisely and effectively in English.

Words and Expressions to Avoid

- *Avoiding Biased Language*
- *Replacing Clichés with Fresh Expressions*
- *Avoiding Empty Language*
- *George Orwell on Style*

- *Avoiding Biased Language*

Language is a powerful tool: We use it deliberately to shape our thoughts and experiences, yet our language can shape us. Biased language frequently occurs with gender, but can also offend groups of people based on sexual orientation, ethnicity, political interest, or race. No discrimination against people based on their race, disability, or age will be acceptable. Therefore, *bias-free language* should always be used.

This type of language uses words and phrases that do not discriminate on the basis of gender, physical condition, age, race, gender, or any other quality. That way, the readers will be able to concentrate on *what* we say rather than on *how* we say it.

1. Refer to a group by the term it prefers.

When referring to groups of people in writing, writers must avoid using insulting terminology when referring to ethnicity, sexual preference, and disabilities. Language changes, so we should be flexible. For example, a hundred years ago, black people were called *coloured.* Fifty years later, the term *Negro* was used. Today, the preferred terms are *African American* and *black.* Here are some other changes to know:

- *Asian* is preferred over *Oriental.*
- *Inuit* is preferred over *Eskimo.*
- *Latino* is the preferred for males with Central and Latin American backgrounds.
- *Latina* is the preferred for females with Central and Latin American backgrounds.

- Only give someone's race if it is relevant to your narrative. Further, if you do mention one person's race, be sure to mention everyone else's.

2. Focus on people, not their conditions.

For disabilities, people should not be identified by their disability. Writers should note that a person has a disability rather than saying the person is the disability. For example, the sentence "*Ray has a mental disability*" says that the disability is a part of Ray; it is different than saying "*Ray is mentally disabled*" which says that the disability is Ray. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of polio. Singer Neil Young and actor Danny Glover have epilepsy. Singer Ray Charles was blind. Actor Tom Cruise and actor-singer Cher have dyslexia, a processing disorder that impedes reading. People with disabilities can be defined broadly as those with limitations in human actions or activities due to physical, emotional, or mental impairments. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 49 million Americans have a disability; the number with a severe disability is 24.1 million. The number will increase as the population ages. Therefore, it is important to know the accepted ways of referring to people with illnesses.

Biased: the deaf

Nonbiased: people with hearing impairments

Biased: AIDS patients

Nonbiased: people being treated for AIDS

Biased: the mentally retarded

Nonbiased: people with mental retardation

Biased: abnormal, afflicted, struck down

Nonbiased: atypical

3. Avoid language that discriminates against older people.

Biased: old people, geezers, aged

Nonbiased: Senior citizen, mature person

4. Avoid sexist language.

Sexist language assigns qualities to people on the basis of their gender. It reinforces stereotypes and assumptions about gender roles

is sexist. Sexist language is often imprecise, and it may be insulting even when used inadvertently. It reflects prejudiced attitudes and stereotypical thinking about the sex roles and traits of both men and women and so discriminates against people by limiting what they can do.

Until recently, modern English usage unquestioningly accepted such words as *man*, *he*, and *his* as generic terms for the whole human species ("No man is an island," for example). However, people have become more aware of the sexist connotations of much common usage and more sensitive to the need for alternative, or non-sexist, language.

Further, the law is increasingly intolerant of biased documents and hostile work environments. Since law forbids discrimination on the basis of gender, people writing *anything*—but especially policy statements, grant proposals, or any other official documents— must be very careful not to use any language that could be considered discriminatory. Otherwise, there might be a lawsuit. Non-sexist language treats both sexes neutrally. It does not make assumptions about the proper gender for a job, nor does it assume that men take precedence over women. Alternative language may at first seem awkward and unfamiliar. For example, the use of *he or she* or *she/he* or *s/he* in place of the generic *he* is certainly ungainly and can become an annoying repetition. However, with careful rephrasing and attention to precise meaning, you can avoid even the generic *he* most of the time. Here are some guidelines to help you use non-sexist language when you write and speak.

➢ Avoid using *man, he,* or *him* to refer to both men and women.

Sexist: A person could lose *his* way in this huge store.

Nonbiased: A person could get lost in this huge store. *or* You could lose your way in this huge store.

The plural may be substituted. In other cases, specific references or rephrasing may be necessary.

Sexist 1. The artist is a man of his time; he creates a visual manifestation of the deepest longings of his culture.

Better: Artists are products of their times; they create visual manifestations of the deepest longings of their cultures.]

Sexist 2. Because man is a being of many environments, his education should not confine him to a limited view of himself.

Better: Because we are beings of many environments, our education should not confine us to a limited view of ourselves.

➢ When common usage implies out-dated stereotypes about occupational or social sex roles, more specific or precise language can eliminate the stereotypes. For example, such words as *foreman, policeman, stewardess*, or *mailman* may be replaced by non-sexist alternatives like *supervisor, police officer, flight attendant,* or *postal worker*. We can use the plural when we discuss both men and women. Here are some of the most offensive examples and acceptable alternatives:

Sexist	**Nonbiased**
chairman	chair, moderator
common man	average person
congressman	senator
female intuition	intuition
female lawyer	lawyer
fireman	fire-fighter
foreman	supervisor
male ego	ego
male nurse	nurse
mankind	humanity, people
old wives' tale	superstition
policeman	police officer
postman	postal carrier
stewardess	flight attendant
waitress	server
workman	worker, employee

➢ Use the correct courtesy title.

Use *Mr.* for men and *Ms.* for women, with these two exceptions: In a business setting, professional titles take precedence over Mr. and

Ms. For example, on the job, one will be referred to as *Dr.* Rozakis rather than *Ms.* Rozakis.

➢ Always use the title the person prefers.

Some women prefer *Miss* to *Ms.* If you are not sure what courtesy title to use, check in a company directory or on previous correspondence to see how the person prefers to be addressed. Also pay attention to the way people introduce themselves.

➢ Use plural pronouns and nouns whenever possible.

Sexist: A good reporter needs to verify *her* sources.

Nonbiased: Good reporters need to verify *their* sources.

- ***Replacing Clichés with Fresh Expressions***

Clichés are descriptive phrases that have lost their effectiveness through overuse. Over time, as writers use certain phrases over and over again, they lose much of their original effect. They become hackneyed and predictable, even irritating at times. Clichés and idioms are generally to be avoided in favour of direct, literal expressions. *Lion's share* is often misunderstood; instead use a term such as *all, most, or two-thirds.* If you have heard the same words and phrases over and over, so has your reader. Replace clichés with fresh, new descriptions. If you can't think of a way to rewrite the phrase to make it new, delete it completely.

Cliché	**Meaning**
clean as a hound's tooth	very clean
cry uncle	give up
get cold feet	afraid to proceed
make your hair stand on end	terrified
on the carpet	reprimanded
on the fritz	broken
on the make	eager for gain
rain or shine	regardless
soft as silk	soft

- ***Avoiding Empty Language***

When's the last time someone tried to sell you an "underground condominium"? It's the newest term for a grave. See any "personal manual data bases" being hawked on the home shopping network? They're what we used to call calendars.

These phrases are artificial, evasive language. Each one pretends to communicate but really doesn't. It is language that makes the bad seem good, the negative appear positive, the unpleasant become pleasant. It shifts responsibility and deliberately aims to distort and deceive.

Doublespeak is language that deliberately disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. Doublespeak may take the form of euphemisms (e.g., "downsizing" for layoffs (an occasion when a company stops employing someone, sometimes temporarily, because the company does not have enough money or enough work), "servicing the target" for bombing), in which case it is primarily meant to make the truth sound more palatable. It may also refer to intentional ambiguity in language or to actual inversions of meaning (for example, naming a state of war "peace"). In such cases, doublespeak disguises the nature of the truth. Doublespeak is most closely associated with political language.

Phrase	**Meaning**
greenmail	economic blackmail
involuntarily leisured	fired
non-positively terminated	fired
out-placed	fired
revenue enhancement	tax increase
sea legs pressed	seafood
takeover artists	corporate raiders
unauthorized withdrawal	robbery
vertically challenged	a short person

When writers use this kind of language, they hide the truth. Always use language truthfully.

1. Avoid inflated language.

Inflated language makes the ordinary seem extraordinary, the common, uncommon; it makes everyday things seem impressive; it gives an air of importance to people, situations, or things that would not normally be considered important; it makes the simple seem complex. With this kind of language, car mechanics become "automotive internists," elevator operators become members of the "vertical transportation corps," used cars become not just "pre-owned" but "experienced cars." When the Pentagon uses the phrase "pre-emptive counterattack" to mean that American forces attacked first, or when it uses the phrase "engage the enemy on all sides" to describe an ambush of American troops, or when it uses the phrase "tactical re-deployment" to describe a retreat by American troops, it is using doublespeak. Inflated language is fundamentally dishonest because it manipulates the truth. Therefore, write and speak clearly and directly.

2. Use euphemisms with care.

- She's between jobs.
- She's a woman of a certain age.

These sentences are *euphemisms,* inoffensive or positive words or phrases used to avoid a harsh reality. When a euphemism is used to mislead or deceive, it becomes doublespeak. A euphemism is a word or phrase that substitutes for language the speaker or writer feels is too blunt or somehow offensive (a *garbage collector* is a *sanitation engineer*, a *janitor* is a *custodial engineer)*. What the writer must guard against is the tendency of euphemisms not only to shield readers from harsh reality but also to obfuscate meaning and truth. The military is especially guilty of this: *bombing raids* become *surgical air-strikes* and *armies* become *peace-keeping forces*. Good writing tells the truth and tells it plain. Euphemisms are a type of evasive language because they cloud the truth. Most of the time, euphemisms drain meaning from truthful writing. As a result, they can make it difficult for your readers and listeners to understand your meaning. This use of language constitutes doublespeak because it is designed to mislead, to cover up the unpleasant. Its real intent is at

variance with its apparent intent. It is language designed to alter our perception of reality.

When a euphemism is used out of sensitivity for the feelings of someone or out of concern for a social or cultural taboo, it is not doublespeak. For example, we express grief that someone has "passed away" because we do not want to say to a grieving person, "I'm sorry your father is dead." The euphemism "passed away" functions here not just to protect the feelings of another person but also to communicate our concern over that person's feelings during a period of mourning.

3. Avoid bureaucratic language.

Another kind of doublespeak is *gobbledygook* or *bureaucratese*. Basically, such doublespeak is simply a matter of piling on words, of overwhelming the audience with words, the bigger the better. For example, when Alan Greenspan was chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, he made this statement when testifying before a Senate committee:

It is a tricky problem to find the particular calibration in timing that would be appropriate to stem the acceleration in risk premiums created by falling incomes without prematurely aborting the decline in the inflation-generated risk premiums.

Did Alan Greenspan's audience really understand what he was saying? Did he believe his statement really explained anything? Perhaps there is some meaning beneath all those words, but it would take some time to search it out. This seems to be language that pretends to communicate but does not.

Another example of bureaucratic language is the following:

Original: The internal memorandum previously circulated should be ignored and disregarded and instead replaced by the internal memorandum sent before the previous one was sent. The memorandum presently at the current time being held by the appropriate personnel should be combined with the previous one to call attention to the fact that the previous one should be ignored by the reader.

Revision: Replace the first memorandum you received with the one that followed it. Please attach this notice to the cancelled version.

Use the following checklist to identify empty language in all its forms. As you reread your own writing to eliminate empty language, ask yourself these questions:

- What do my words mean?
- To whom is the remark addressed?
- Under what conditions is the remark being made?
- What is my intent?
- What is the result of the remarks?
- Which words will help me express my ideas most clearly and directly?

- ***George Orwell on Style***

"George Orwell" was the pen name of Eric Blair, one of the most brilliant English stylists ever. In his landmark essay "Politics and the English Language," Orwell wrote, "Modern English prose . . . consists less and less of words chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of phrases tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse." He concluded: "The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink." Language is the primary conductor between your brain and the minds of your audience. Ineffective language weakens and distorts ideas.

If you want to be understood, if you want your ideas to spread, using effective language must be your top priority. In the modern world of business and politics this is hardly ever the case. In many instances, imprecise language is used intentionally to avoid taking a position and offending various demographics.

But Orwell didn't just complain. Fortunately, he suggested a number of remedies. His guidelines have become the classic yardstick for a strong and effective writing style.

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

Phrases such as *toe the line*, *ride roughshod over*, *stand shoulder to shoulder with*, *play into the hands of, an axe to grind, Achilles' heel,*

swan song, and *hotbed* come to mind quickly and feel comforting and melodic. For this exact reason they must be avoided. Common phrases have become so comfortable that they create no emotional response. Take the time to invent fresh, powerful images.

2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.

Long words don't make you sound intelligent unless used skilfully. In the wrong situation they'll have the opposite effect, making you sound pretentious and arrogant. They're also less likely to be understood and more awkward to read.

When Hemingway was criticized by Faulkner for his limited word choice he replied: "Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use."

3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. Accordingly, any words that don't contribute meaning to a passage dilute its power. Less is always better.

4. Never use the passive voice when you can use the active.

At the heart of every good sentence is a strong, precise verb; the converse is true as well – at the core of most confusing, awkward, or wordy sentences lies a weak verb. Try to use the active voice whenever possible.

5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

This is tricky because much of the writing published on the internet is highly technical. If possible, remain accessible to the average reader. If your audience is highly specialized this is a judgment call. You don't want to drag on with unnecessary explanation, but try to help people understand what you're writing about.

6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous (extremely cruel or unpleasant, or failing to reach acceptable social standards).

Orwell finishes his essay: "Political language [...] is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an

appearance of solidity to pure wind. *One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase [...] into the dustbin, where it belongs".*

Exercises

Exercise 1. Are the following statements true or false? Correct the false ones.

1. Always use bias-free language, language that uses words and phrases that don't discriminate on the basis of gender, physical condition, age, race, gender, or any other quality.

2. Today, the term *Oriental* is preferred over *Asian.*

3. Likewise, *Latina* is the preferred designation for males with Central and Latin American backgrounds.

4. Only give someone's race if it is relevant to your narrative. Further, if you do mention one person's race, be sure to mention everyone else's.

5. The nonbiased term is "the deaf"; the biased term is "people with hearing impairments."

6. Sexist language assigns qualities to people on the basis of their gender.

7. Sexist language discriminates only against women, not men.

8. Non-sexist language treats both sexes neutrally.

9. Avoid using *man, he,* or *him* to refer to both men and women.

10. In a business setting, professional titles do not take precedence over *Mr.* and *Ms.*

11. To make your language nonbiased, use plural pronouns and nouns whenever possible.

12. If you want your documents to sound important, use a little inflated language, words and expressions that make the ordinary seem extraordinary.

13. Avoid euphemisms if they obscure your meaning.

14. Use euphemisms to spare someone's feelings, especially in delicate situations.

15. *Clichés* are wordy and unnecessarily complex. As a result, clichés become meaningless because they are evasive and wordy.

Exercise 2. Rewrite each sentence to remove the bias.

Example: Every pilot must inspect the outside of his plane before he gets into the cockpit. - Pilots must inspect the outside of t h e i r planes before they get into the cockpit.

1. Throughout the history of mankind, war has been the main way countries have obtained additional land.
2. In my opinion, a person cannot be a good doctor if he is not caring, concerned, and competent.
3. Every student has been tested at least once in his life.
4. I would also ask if a professor is biased about his students.
5. A parent must use her love and understanding when she and her child disagree.
6. If an employer dresses well, then he presents a positive image to his employees and customers.
7. A student on a student visa is permitted to work on campus, and he is paid $5.25 an hour.
8. A candidate for high office must have a supportive wife and family.
9. All a person can do is his best.
10. If a parent wants his children to grow into responsible adults, he should provide them with discipline, support, and guidance.
11. A professor should correct his students' papers according to this set of predetermined guidelines.
12. From the beginning of time, mankind used horses in one way or another.
13. Dan's grandmother lives by old wives' tales.
14. Are there any freshmen who would like to work in the Writing Centre?
15. We need more manpower.

Exercise 3. Briefly describe the style of each of the following selections, identifying the purpose and audience. Then decide

which style is closest to your own and why. If you wish to change your writing style, which essay is closest to the style you want to adopt?

1. When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former— while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably, so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart—has fairly a right to present that truth under the circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation. If he think fit, also, he may so manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture. He will be wise, no doubt, to make a very moderate use of the privileges here stated, and, especially, to mingle the Marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavour, than as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public. (Nathaniel Hawthorne)

2. The film industry changed from silent films to the "talkies" in the late 1920s, after the success in 1927 of *The Jazz Singer.* Mickey Mouse was one of the few "stars" who made a smooth transition from silent films to talkies. Mickey made his first cartoon with sound in November 1928. The cartoon was called *Steamboat Willie.* Walt Disney (1901–1966) drew Mickey as well as used his own voice for Mickey's high-pitched tones. Within a year, hundreds of Mickey Mouse clubs had sprung up all across the United States. By 1931, more than a million people belong to a Mickey Mouse club. The phenomenon was not confined to America. In London, Madame Tussaud's famous wax museum placed a wax figure of Mickey alongside its statues of other famous film stars. In 1933, according to Disney Studios, Mickey received 800,000 fan letters—an average of more than 2,000 letters a day. This was the same number of letters sent to the top human stars of

the day such as Douglas Fairbanks, Senior. To date, no "star" has ever received as much fan mail as Mickey Mouse. (Laurie Rozakis)

3. While there are currently no societies where we can observe creolization occurring with a spoken language, we can observe the creolization of sign languages for the deaf. Since 1979, in Nicaragua, children at schools for the deaf have essentially formed a pidgin. None of them had a real signing system, so they pooled their collections of makeshift gestures into what is now called the Lenguaje de Signos Nicaragьense (LSN). Like any spoken pidgin, LSN is a collection of jargon that has no consistent grammar, and everyone who uses it uses it differently.

When younger children joined the school, after LSN existed, they creolized it into what is called Idioma de Signos Nicaragьense (ISN). While LSN involves a lot of pantomime, ISN is much more stylized, fluid and compact. And children who use ISN all use it the same way—the children had created a standardized language without need for textbooks or grammar classes. Many grammatical devices, such as tenses and complex sentence structures, that didn't exist in LSN, were introduced by the children into ISN. (Charles Rozakis)

Exercise 4. Evaluate George Orwell's guidelines for effective writing. Do you agree or disagree? Justify your answer with your own examples.

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