Holt Handbook

Chapters

Chapter 1 Sentence Fragments

Sentence (Defined)

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.

EXAMPLES

The weary executive had left her briefcase on the commuter train.
For how many years was Winston Churchill the prime minister of England?
What extraordinary courage the early settlers must have had!

Sentence Fragment (Defined)

Run-on Sentence (Defined)

Chapter 1

Sentence Fragment (Defined)

A sentence fragment is a group of words that is punctuated as a sentence but does not express a complete thought.

Correcting Sentence Fragments

Chapter 1

Correcting Sentence Fragments

Sentence fragments may be corrected in one of two ways:

(a) by adding to the fragment one or more words that will complete the thought

Fragment Photographed families who were victims of the Great Depression. [missing subject]
Sentence Dorothea Lange photographed families who were victims of the Great Depression.

Fragment After the flood, the barn roof in pieces in the yard. [missing verb]
Sentence After the flood, the barn roof lay in pieces in the yard

Fragment We observing the bacteria through a powerful microscope. [missing helping verb]
Sentence We were observing the bacteria through a powerful microscope.

Fragment When she won three gold medals in track at the 1960 Olympics.
Sentence Wilma Rudolph became famous when she won three gold medals in track at the 1960 Olympics.

(b) by attaching the fragment to the sentence that comes before or after it

Fragment I found my sister in the den. Making origami swans out of blue and green paper.
Sentence I found my sister in the den, making origami swans out of blue and green paper.

Fragment They got together all the supplies they would need. To make the canoe trip go smoothly.
Sentence They got together all the supplies they would need to make the canoe trip go smoothly.

Fragment Coretta brought her two favorite kites. A stunt kite and a parafoil kite.
Sentence Coretta brought her two favorite kites, a stunt kite and a parafoil kite.

Fragment Some lizards used to be killed for their skins. Which were used to make wallets and handbags.
Sentence Some lizards used to be killed for their skins, which were used to make wallets and handbags.

Fragment After I watched that scary movie. I had nightmares.
Sentence After I watched that scary movie, I had nightmares.

Chapter 2 Run-On Sentence

Run-on Sentence (Defined)

A run-on sentence is made up of two complete thoughts run together as if they were one sentence. Most run-ons are comma splices--two complete thoughts that have only a comma between them. Other run-ons, called fused sentences, have no punctuation between the two complete thoughts.

Correcting Run-on Sentences

Chapter 2

Correcting Run-on Sentences

Run-on sentences may be corrected in one of five ways:

(a) by placing a period at the end of the first complete thought and capitalizing the first word following it

Run-on Bill "Bojangles" Robinson went to Hollywood in 1930, over the next nine years he made fourteen motion pictures.
Correct Bill "Bojangles" Robinson went to Hollywood in 1930. Over the next nine years he made fourteen motion pictures.

(b) by using a comma and a coordinating conjunction between the two complete thoughts

Run-on We were fifteen minutes late, the concert hadn't started yet.
Correct We were fifteen minutes late, but the concert hadn't started yet.

(c) by placing a semicolon between the two complete thoughts

Run-on Everybody dreams at night, dreaming is a normal part of the sleep cycle.
Correct Everybody dreams at night; dreaming is a normal part of the sleep cycle.

(d) by using a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb between the two complete thoughts

Run-on We struggled to set up the tent the mosquitoes ate us alive.
Correct We struggled to set up the tent; meanwhile, the mosquitoes ate us alive.

(e) by changing one of the complete thoughts to a subordinate clause

Run-On Lightning speeds to our eyes at 186,000 miles per second, thunder creeps to our ears at 1,087 feet per second.
Correct While lightning speeds to our eyes at 186,000 miles per second, thunder creeps to our ears at 1,087 feet per second.

Chapter 3 Agreement Of Subject And Verb

Agreement in Number

A verb should agree with its subject in number.

(a) Singular subjects take singular verbs.

EXAMPLES

The child takes an afternoon nap.
She cleans and restores old paintings.

(b) Plural subjects take plural verbs.

EXAMPLES

The children take an afternoon nap.
They clean and restore old paintings.

The number of a verb phrase is indicated by the form of its first auxiliary (helping) verb.

EXAMPLES

The child is taking an afternoon nap. [singular subject and verb phrase]
They are cleaning and restoring old paintings. [plural subject and verb phrase]

Intervening Phrases and Clauses

The number of the subject is not changed by a phrase or a clause following the subject.

EXAMPLES

The short stories in this anthology are by various contemporary Native American writers. [The prepositional phrase, *in this anthology,* does not affect the number of the subject, *short stories.*]

Edmonia Lewis, whose subjects included John Brown and Abraham Lincoln, was the first African American woman to achieve renown for her sculpture. [The adjective clause, *whose subjects include Abraham Lincoln and John Brown,* does not affect the number of the subject, *Edmonia Lewis.*]

The number of the subject is also not affected when the subject is followed by a phrase that begins with an expression such as *along with, as well as, in addition to,* or *together with.*

EXAMPLES

The man in the next apartment, as well as the people across the hall, has lived in the building since the mid-1970s. [singular subject and verb]

The people across the hall, as well as the man in the next apartment, have lived in the building since the mid-1970s. [plural subject and verb]

Indefinite Pronouns (Agreement Subject, Verb)

(a) The following indefinite pronouns are singular: *anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, one, somebody, someone,* and *something.*

EXAMPLES

Is anyone in the audience a medical doctor?
Each of the boys does his own cooking.
Either of these videos is suitable for a four-year-old.

(b) The following indefinite pronouns are plural: *both, few, many,* and *several.*

EXAMPLES

Both of the universities offer degrees in forestry.
Few on the committee ever miss a meeting.
Several of the students have transferred.

(c) The following indefinite pronouns may be singular or plural: *all, any, most, none,* and *some.*

These pronouns are singular when they refer to singular words. They are plural when they refer to plural words.

EXAMPLES

All of the workout seems simple. [*All* refers to the singular noun *workout.*]
All of the exercises seem simple. [*All* refers to the plural noun *exercises.*]
Is any of the salad left? [*Any* refers to the singular noun *salad.*]
Are any of the vegetables left? [*Any* refers to the plural noun *vegetables.*]
Some of the show was hilarious. [*Some* refers to the singular noun *show.*]
Some of the acts were hilarious. [*Some* refers to the plural noun *acts.*]

Compound Subjects

(a) Subjects joined by *and* usually take a plural verb.

EXAMPLES

Spanish and Quechua are the official languages of Peru.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Civil Rights Memorial were designed by Maya Lin.

When the subjects joined by *and* name or refer to only one person or thing, they take a singular verb.

EXAMPLES

My next-door neighbor and best friend is from Mexico. [one person]

Macaroni and cheese is a nutritious main course. [one dish]

(b) Singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* take a singular verb.

EXAMPLES

A jacket or a sweater is warm enough for tonight.

Neither the coach nor the trainer knows the umpire.

Either Soledad or Chen writes the weekly editorial.

(c) When a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by *or* or *nor,* the verb agrees with the subject nearer the verb.

EXAMPLES

Either the musicians or the singer is off-key. [The singular subject *singer* is nearer the verb.]

Either the singer or the musicians are off-key. [The plural subject *musicians* is nearer the verb.]

Whenever possible, revise the sentence to avoid this awkward construction.

EXAMPLE

Either the singer is off-key, or the musicians are.

Subjects Following Verbs

When the subject follows the verb, as in questions and in sentences beginning with *here* or *there,* identify the subject and make sure that the verb agrees with it.

EXAMPLES

When is Passover this year?
When are Passover and Easter this year?
Here is the book you reserved.
Here are the books you reserved.
There was a detour on the interstate.
There were no detours on the interstate.

Contractions such as *Here's, There's, When's,* and *Where's* incorporate the verb *is.* Use such contractions only with subjects that are singular in meaning.

Nonstandard	Here's your gloves.
Standard	Here are your gloves.
Standard	Here's your pair of gloves.
Nonstandard	When's your finals?
Standard	When are your finals?

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns may be either singular or plural. A collective noun--such as *audience, band, family, flock, swarm*--is singular in form but names a group of persons or things. A collective noun takes a singular verb when the noun refers to the group as a unit. A collective noun takes a plural verb when the noun refers to the parts or members of the group.

Singular The class meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. [The class meets as a unit.]
Plural The class usually bring their calculators with them. [The members of the class bring separate calculators.]

Singular The team has won the semifinals. [The team won as a unit.]
Plural The team have voted twenty-one to nothing to buy new uniforms. [The members of the team voted individually.]

Singular A herd of cattle was stranded by the flood. [The herd was stranded as a unit.]
Plural The herd of cattle were grazing in the clover. [The cattle were grazing individually.]

Expressions of Amounts

An expression stating an amount (such as a measurement, a statistic, or a fraction) may be singular or plural.

(a) An expression stating an amount is singular when the amount is thought of as a unit and is plural when the amount is thought of as separate parts.

EXAMPLES

Twenty-seven dollars is all we've raised so far. [The amount refers to one unit. The entire expression *Twenty-seven dollars* is the subject.]

Twenty-seven dollars were counted out by the teller. [The amount refers to separate dollars. Only the noun *dollars* is the subject. *Twenty-seven* is an adjective telling how many.]

Eight hours is now the standard workday throughout the United States. [one unit]

Eight hours were set aside for that miniseries about the Civil War. [separate hours]

(b) A fraction or a percentage is singular when it refers to a singular word and is plural when it refers to a plural word.

EXAMPLES

Two thirds of my bibliography has been typed. [The fraction refers to the singular noun *bibliography.*]

Two thirds of my references have been typed. [The fraction refers to the plural noun *references.*]

Forty-two percent of the senior class is planning to go to college. [The percentage refers to the singular noun *class.*]

Forty-two percent of the seniors are planning to go to college. [The percentage refers to the plural noun *seniors.*]

(c) Expressions of measurement (length, weight, capacity, area) are usually singular.

EXAMPLES

Two and fifty-four hundredths centimeters equals one inch.

Seven pounds was the baby's weight at birth.

Ninety miles is the distance between Florida and Cuba.

Titles of Works, Names of Countries

The title of a creative work (such as a book, song, film, or painting) and the name of a country (even if it is plural in form) take a singular verb.

EXAMPLES

Dust Tracks on a Road is Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography.

Vermilion Lotuses was among the paintings by Chinese artist Chang Dai-chien exhibited at the Smithsonian Institution.

The United Arab Emirates generates most of its revenue from the sale of oil.

The United States of America belongs to both the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

Nouns Plural in Form, Singular in Meaning

(a) The following nouns, plural in form, always take singular verbs.

civics	genetics	mumps
economics	mathematics	news
electronics	measles	physics

EXAMPLES

Mumps is usually more severe in adults than in children.

Economics was my mother's major in college.

(b) The following nouns, plural in form, always take plural verbs.

binoculars	pliers	shears
eyeglasses	scissors	trousers

EXAMPLES

The binoculars are on the screened porch.

Have these shears ever been sharpened?

(c) Many nouns ending in *-ics,* such as *acoustics, athletics, ethics, politics, statistics,* and *tactics,* may be singular or plural in meaning. Generally, such a noun takes a singular verb when naming a science, a system, or a skill. It takes a plural verb when naming qualities, operations, or activities.

EXAMPLES

Who said, "Politics is the art of the possible"?

Are your politics like those of your parents?

If you don't know whether a noun that is plural in form is singular or plural in meaning, check a dictionary.

Subjects and Predicate Nominatives

A verb should always agree with its subject, not with its predicate nominative.

EXAMPLES

Quick reflexes are one requirement for becoming an astronaut.
One requirement for becoming an astronaut is quick reflexes.
The highlight of the evening was the compositions by Quincy Jones.
The compositions by Quincy Jones were the highlight of the evening.

Chapter 3

Doesn't **or** ***Don't***

Doesn't (does not), not *don't (do not),* is used with singular subjects except *I* and *you.*

Nonstandard	He don't live here anymore.
Standard	He doesn't [does not] live here anymore.
Nonstandard	It don't look like rain.
Standard	It doesn't [does not] look like rain.
Nonstandard	Ruth don't know about the surprise party for her.
Standard	Ruth doesn't [does not] know about the surprise party for her.

Chapter 3

Chapter 4 Agreement Of Pronoun And Antecedent

Agreement in Number and Gender

A pronoun usually refers to a noun or another pronoun. The word to which a pronoun refers is called its antecedent.

A pronoun should agree with its antecedent in number and in gender.

(a) Singular pronouns refer to singular antecedents. Plural pronouns refer to plural antecedents.

EXAMPLES

Arthur Mitchell founded his own ballet company.

Native Americans live their lives in harmony with the natural world around them.

(b) A few singular pronouns indicate gender. The singular pronouns *he, him, his,* and *himself* refer to masculine antecedents. The singular pronouns *she, her, hers,* and *herself* refer to feminine antecedents. The singular pronouns *it, its,* and *itself* refer to antecedents that are neuter (neither masculine nor feminine).

EXAMPLES

Rudolfo stated his position clearly.

Maxine has already prepared her acceptance speech.

The river overflowed its banks.

Indefinite Pronouns (Agreement with Antecedent)

Singular pronouns are used to refer to the following antecedents: *anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, one, somebody, someone,* and *something.*

These words do not indicate gender. To determine their gender, look at the phrases following them.

EXAMPLES

Each of these women runs her own business.
One of the men in the audience forgot his coat.

If the antecedent may be either masculine or feminine, use both the masculine and feminine pronouns to refer to it.

EXAMPLES

Everyone should learn how to manage his or her money.
Each of the participants in the contest paid his or her own entry fee.

You can often avoid the awkward *his or her* construction by substituting an article (*a, an,* or *the*) for the construction, or by rephrasing the sentence, using the plural forms of both the pronoun and its antecedent.

EXAMPLES

Each of the participants in the contest must pay an entry fee.
All of the participants in the contest must pay their own entry fees.

A plural pronoun is used to refer to a singular antecedent only when the antecedent is clearly plural in meaning.

Misleading	Everyone in the audience had enjoyed the performance so much that he or she called for an encore.
Improved	Everyone in the audience had enjoyed the performance so much that they called for an encore.

Antecedents Joined by *and*

A plural pronoun is used to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *and.*

EXAMPLES

Hilda and Lupe presented their reports.

After Ethel, Jared, and Cam ate lunch together, they went to their next class.

Chapter 4

Antecedents Joined by *or* or *nor*

A singular pronoun is used to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor.*

EXAMPLES

Either Paul or Diego is willing to drive his car.

Neither Sue nor Maria brought her vacation photos with her.

When a singular and a plural antecedent are joined by *or* or *nor,* the pronoun usually agrees with the nearer antecedent.

EXAMPLES

Neither the puppies nor our full-grown dog likes its new toys.

Neither our full-grown dog nor the puppies like their new toys.

Whenever possible, revise the sentence to avoid such an awkward construction.

EXAMPLE

The puppies don't like their new toys, and our full-grown dog doesn't like its new toys, either.

Sometimes following the rules results in another type of awkward or misleading sentence.

Misleading	Either Juan or Lupe is bringing her guitar. [The pronoun agrees in gender with the nearer of the two antecedents; however, the antecedents are of different genders.]
Revised	Either Juan is bringing his guitar, or Lupe is bringing hers.

Chapter 5 Case Forms Of Pronouns

Personal Pronouns as Subjects, Predicate Nominatives

Personal Pronouns in Nominative Case: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they.*

(a) A subject of a verb is in the nominative case.

EXAMPLES

They are playing backgammon.

We think that she deserves the Most Valuable Player award.

He and I built a scale model of the Temple of the Magician. [compound subject]

(b) A predicate nominative is in the nominative case. A predicate nominative follows a linking verb and explains or identifies the subject of the verb. A pronoun used as a predicate nominative always follows a form of the linking verb *be: am, is, are, was, were, be,* or *been.*

EXAMPLES

The one that you should appoint chairperson is she. [*She* follows *is* and identifies the subject *one.*]

The first speaker will be he. [*He* follows *will be* and identifies the subject *speaker.*]

The managers of the new Thai restaurant are she and he. [compound predicate nominative]

Personal Pronouns as Objects of Verbs, Objects of Prepositions

Personal Pronouns in Objective Case: *me, you, him, her, it, us, them.*

(a) An object of a verb is in the objective case. An object of a verb may be a direct object or an indirect object. A direct object follows an action verb and tells whom or what receives the action.

EXAMPLES

Carmen has invited me to the fiesta. [*Me* tells whom Carmen has invited.]

The kittens were asleep until the sudden noise woke them. [*Them* tells what the noise woke.]

The new student asked Kelly and him for directions. [compound direct object]

An indirect object comes between an action verb and a direct object and tells to whom or what or for whom or what the action is performed.

EXAMPLES

His uncle brought him a poncho from Mexico. [*Him* tells to whom his uncle brought a poncho.]

Because the engine was running rough, Uncle Theo gave it a tune-up. [*It* tells to what Uncle Theo gave a tune-up.]

Mr. Osaka gave him and her the job. [compound indirect object]

(b) An object of a preposition is in the objective case. An object of a preposition comes at the end of a phrase that begins with a preposition.

EXAMPLES

for me	after her
next to them	with us
beside him	between you and me
by them	instead of me
behind him and her	

Personal Pronouns as Appositives

Personal Pronouns in Nominative Case: *I, you, he, she, it, we, they*

Personal Pronouns in Objective Case: *me, you, him, her, it, us, them*

An appositive is a noun or a pronoun placed next to another noun or pronoun to explain or identify it. An appositive is in the same case as the word to which it refers.

EXAMPLES

Both teachers, Mr. Petrakis and she, have agreed to coach the academic team. [*Mr. Petrakis* and *she* are in apposition with the subject *teachers.* Since a subject is always in the nominative case, an appositive to the subject is also in the nominative case.]

For two of the major roles in *Purlie Victorious,* the director chose us, Joel and me. [*Joel* and *me* are in apposition with the direct object *us.* Since *us* is in the objective case, an appositive to *us* is also in the objective case.]

To help you choose which pronoun form to use in a compound appositive, try each form in the position of the word to which it refers.

Choices: Two seniors, Theo and (she, her), gave the speeches. [The appositive refers to *seniors,* the subject of the verb *gave.* Would you say s*he gave* or *her gave* ?]
Answer: Two seniors, Theo and she, gave the speeches.

Choices: The speeches were given by two seniors, Theo and (she, her). [The appositive refers to *seniors,* the object of the preposition *by.* Were the speeches given *by she* or *by her* ?]
Answer: The speeches were given by two seniors, Theo and her.

Sometimes the pronoun *we* or *us* is followed by a noun appositive. To determine which pronoun form to use, try each form without the noun appositive.

Choices: (We, Us) senior citizens are in charge of the paper drive. [Would you say *we are in charge* or *us are in charge* ?]
Answer: We senior citizens are in charge of the paper drive.

Choices: Coach Shapiro talked to (we, us) players about sportsmanship. [Would you say Coach Shapiro *talked to we* or *talked to us* ?]
Answer: Coach Shapiro talked to us players about sportsmanship.

Be sure to use the pronoun form that expresses the meaning you intend. Notice how the meaning of each of the following sentences depends on the form of the pronoun in the elliptical construction.

EXAMPLES

I think I helped Macaulay more than she. [I think I helped Macaulay more than she helped Macaulay.]

I think I helped Macaulay more than her. [I think I helped Macaulay more than I helped her.]

Who and Whom

Nominative Case	who	whoever
Objective Case	whom	whomever

These pronouns may be used in two ways: to form questions and to introduce subordinate clauses. When used to form questions, these pronouns are called interrogative pronouns. When used to introduce subordinate clauses, these pronouns are called relative pronouns.

(a) The form an interrogative pronoun takes depends on its use in the question. *Who* is used as a subject of a verb or as a predicate nominative. *Whom* is used as an object of a verb or as an object of a preposition.

Nominative Who plays the part of Peter Pan in the film *Hook*? [*Who* is the subject of the verb *plays.*]
Who could it be? [*Who* is the predicate nominative identifying the subject *it.*]

Objective Whom did Ella choose? [*Whom* is the direct object of the verb *did choose.*]
With whom did Aaron Neville sing the ballad? [*Whom* is the object of the preposition *with.*]

(b) The form a relative pronoun takes depends on its use in the subordinate clause. When choosing between *who* and *whom* in a subordinate clause, follow these steps:

Choices: Nadine Gordimer, (who, whom) is famous for writing novels and short stories set in South Africa, won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991.
Step 1: Find the subordinate clause. In the example sentence, the subordinate clause is *(who, whom) is famous for writing novels and short stories set in South Africa.*
Step 2: Decide how the relative pronoun is used in the clause--subject, predicate nominative, object of the verb, or object of a preposition. In the example sentence, the relative pronoun serves as the subject of the verb *is.*
Step 3: Determine the case for this use of the relative pronoun. A subject of a verb is in the nominative case.
Step 4: Select the correct form of the relative pronoun. The nominative form of the relative pronoun is *who.*
Answer: Nadine Gordimer, who is famous for writing novels and short stories set in South Africa, won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991.

Choices: Harry Houdini, (who, whom) audiences adored, performed daring escape tricks.
Step 1: The subordinate clause is *(who, whom) audiences adored.*
Step 2: The relative pronoun serves as the direct object of the verb *adored.*
Step 3: A direct object is in the objective case.
Step 4: The objective form of the relative pronoun is *whom.*
Answer: Harry Houdini, whom audiences adored, performed daring escape tricks.

Remember that the case of a relative pronoun is not affected by any word outside the subordinate clause.

Choices: A plaque will be given to (whoever, whomever) catches the most fish.
Step 1: The subordinate clause is *(whoever, whomever) catches the most fish.*
Step 2: The relative pronoun serves as the subject of the verb *catches,* not as object of the preposition *to.* The entire subordinate clause is the object of

to.
Step 3: A subject of a verb is in the nominative case.
Step 4: The nominative form of the relative pronoun is *whoever.*
Answer: A plaque will be given to whoever catches the most fish.

(c) When choosing between *who* and *whom* to begin a question or a subordinate clause, do not be misled by a parenthetical expression consisting of a subject and a verb, such as *I think, he feels,* or *they believe.* Select the pronoun form you would use if the parenthetical expression were not in the sentence.

EXAMPLES

Who do you suppose will win the election? [*Who* is the subject of the verb *will win.*]

Roberta is the student who Mr. Hines thinks should be a chemist. [*Who* is the subject of the verb *should be.*]

Pronouns Ending in *-self* or *-selves*

Reflexive and intensive pronouns have the same forms: *myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.*

NOTE: **The words *hisself* and *theirselves* are nonstandard usage. Use *himself* and *themselves.***

(a) A reflexive pronoun refers to another word that indicates the same individual(s).

EXAMPLES

I hurt myself. [*Myself* refers to *I* .]

Clarice and Jane should be proud of themselves. [*Themselves* refers to *Clarice and Jane.*]

(b) An intensive pronoun emphasizes another word that indicates the same individual(s).

EXAMPLES

Simon himself developed both rolls of film. [*Himself* emphasizes *Simon* .]

Jorge and Kim installed the tape player in the car themselves. [*Themselves* emphasizes *Jorge and Kim.*]

(c) Avoid using a pronoun ending in *-self* or *-selves* when there is no word that it can refer to or emphasize. Instead, use a simple personal pronoun.

Nonstandard Mariah and myself went to the rodeo.
Standard Mariah and I went to the rodeo.

Nonstandard I know I can depend on Katrina and yourself.
Standard I know I can depend on Katrina and you.

Personal Pronouns Preceding Gerunds

A gerund is a verb form that ends in *-ing* and functions as a noun. A pronoun preceding a gerund is in the possessive case--*my, your, his, her, its, our, their.*

EXAMPLES

John objected to my using his new computer. [*My,* not *me,* is used because John objected to the using, not to me.]

Their winning the Stanley Cup surprised us ice hockey fans. [*Their,* instead of *them* or *they,* is used because the winning, not they, surprised us.]

Do not confuse a gerund with a present participle, which also ends in *-ing.* A gerund serves as a noun, whereas a present participle serves as an adjective. A noun or a pronoun before a present participle is not in the possessive case.

EXAMPLE

We heard them talking in the hallway. [*Talking* is a participle that modifies the pronoun *them.*]

The form of a pronoun before an *-ing* word often depends on the meaning you want to express. If you want to emphasize the *-ing* word, use the possessive form. If you want to emphasize the pronoun preceding the *-ing* word, avoid the possessive form. Notice the difference in meaning between the following sentences.

EXAMPLES

Can you imagine my riding an elephant? [emphasis on *riding*]

Can you imagine me riding an elephant? [emphasis on *me*]

Chapter 6 Correct Verb Usage

The Principal Parts of Verbs

Every verb has four basic forms called its principal parts: the infinitive, the present participle, the past, and the past participle. All other verb forms are derived from these principal parts.

The following examples include *is* and *have* in parentheses to indicate that helping verbs (forms of *be* and *have*) are used with the present participle and past participle forms of verbs.

Infinitive	**Present Participle**	**Past**	**Past Participle**
live	(is) living	lived	(have) lived
talk	(is) talking	talked	(have) talked
run	(is) running	ran	(have) run
rise	(is) rising	rose	(have) risen
hit	(is) hitting	hit	(have) hit

Regular Verbs

A regular verb forms the past and past participle by adding *-d* or *-ed* to the infinitive form. A few regular verbs have alternate past and past participle forms ending in *-t.*

Infinitive	**Present Participle**	**Past**	**Past Participle**
care	(is) caring	cared	(have) cared
remove	(is) removing	removed	(have) removed
suppose	(is) supposing	supposed	(have) supposed
match	(is) matching	matched	(have) matched
offer	(is) offering	offered	(have) offered
push	(is) pushing	pushed	(have) pushed
burn	(is) burning	burned *or* burnt	(have) burned *or* burnt
dream	(is) dreaming	dreamed *or* dreamt	(have) dreamed *or* dreamt
leap	(is) leaping	leaped or leapt	(have) leaped *or* leapt

NOTE: **The regular verbs *deal* and *mean* always form the past and past participle by adding *-t: dealt, (have) dealt; meant, (have) meant.***

Irregular Verbs

An irregular verb forms the past and past participle by changing vowels *or* consonants, changing vowels *and* consonants, or making no change.

	Infinitive	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
Vowel Change	sing	(is) singing	sang	(have) sung
	drink	(is) drinking	drank	(have) drunk
Consonant Change	lend	(is) lending	lent	(have) lent
	make	(is) making	made	(have) made
Vowel and Consonant Change	buy	(is) buying	bought	(have) bought
	go	(is) going	went	(have) gone
No Change	cost	(is) costing	cost	(have) cost
	burst	(is) bursting	burst	(have) burst

If you're not sure about the principal parts of a verb, look in a dictionary. Entries for irregular verbs list the principal parts. If the principal parts are not listed, the verb is a regular verb.

Lie and Lay

The verb *lie* means "to rest" or "to stay, to recline, or to remain in a certain state or position." *Lie* never takes an object. The verb *lay* means "to put [something] in a place." *Lay* usually takes an object.

Infinitive	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
lie (to rest)	(is) lying	lay	(have) lain
lay (to put)	(is) laying	laid	(have) laid

EXAMPLES

Your car keys are lying on the kitchen counter. [no object]

The servers are laying a napkin on each diner's plate. [*Napkin* is the object of *are laying.*]

The valedictorian spoke of the challenges that lay before the graduates. [no object]

Last winter we laid seed on the ground for the wild birds. [*Seed* is the object of *laid.*]

The clothes to be ironed have lain in the basket all week. [no object]

The state legislators have laid the matter before the voters. [*Matter* is the object of *have laid.*]

Sit and Set

The verb *sit* means "to rest in an upright, seated position." *Sit* seldom takes an object.
The verb *set* means "to put [something] in a place." *Set* usually takes an object.

Infinitive	**Present Participle**	**Past**	**Past Participle**
sit (to rest)	(is) sitting	sat	(have) sat
set (to put)	(is) setting	set	(have) set

EXAMPLES

Where should we sit? [no object]

Where should I set this bag of groceries? [*Bag* is the object of *should set.*]

We sat in the bleachers behind the end zone at last night's game. [no object]

Liang set the platter of egg foo yong on the table. [*Platter* is the object of *set.*]

Chapter 6

Rise and *Raise*

The verb *rise* means "to go up" or "to get up." *Rise* never takes an object. The verb *raise* means "to cause [something] to rise" or "to lift up." *Raise* usually takes an object.

Infinitive	**Present Participle**	**Past**	**Past Participle**
rise (to go up)	(is) rising	rose	(have) risen
raise (to lift up)	(is) raising	raised	(have) raised

EXAMPLES

Una rose from her desk and walked to the front of the classroom. [no object]

The players raised the coach onto their shoulders. [*Coach* is the object of *raised.*]

The number of women who work outside the home has risen steadily during the past decade. [no object]

The reporters have raised that issue at several press conferences. [*Issue* is the object of *have raised.*]

The Forms of Verbs According to Tense

The tense of a verb indicates the time of the action or state of being that is expressed by the verb.

Every verb has six tenses: present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect. These six tenses are formed from the principal parts of the verb. Listing all of the forms of a verb according to tense is called conjugating a verb.

Conjugation Of The Verb *Give*
Principal Parts

	Present		Past
Infinitive	Participle	Past	Participle
give	(is) giving	gave	(have) given

Present Tense

Singular	***Plural***
I give	we give
you give	you give
he, she, it gives	they give

past tense

Singular	***Plural***
I gave	we gave
you gave	you gave
he, she, it gave	they gave

Future Tense
(*will* or *shall* + infinitive)

Singular	***Plural***
I will (shall) give	we will (shall) give
you will give	you will give
he, she, it will give	they will give

Present Perfect Tense
(*have* or *has* + past participle)

Singular	***Plural***
I have given	we have given
you have given	you have given
he, she it has given	they have given

Past Perfect Tense
(*had* + past participle)

Singular	***Plural***
I had given	we had given

you had given	you had given
he, she, it had given	they had given

Future Perfect Tense
(*will have* or *shall have* + past participle)

Singular	***Plural***
I will (shall) have given	we will (shall) have given
you will have given	you will have given
he, she, it will have given	they will have given

Each tense has an additional form called the progressive form, which expresses continuing action or state of being. In each tense, the progressive verb form consists of the appropriate tense of *be* and the verb's present participle. Some tenses also include one or more helping verbs.

Present Progressive	am, is, are giving
Past Progressive	was, were giving
Future Progressive	will (shall) be giving
Present Perfect Progressive	has been, have been giving
Past Perfect Progressive	had been giving
Future Perfect Progressive	will (shall) have been giving

Only the present and the past tenses have another form called the emphatic form, which shows emphasis. In the present tense, the emphatic form of a verb consists of *do* or *does* and the verb's infinitive. In the past tense, the emphatic form consists of *did* and the verb's infinitive.

Present Emphatic	do, does give
Past Emphatic	did give

The Uses of the Present Tense

The present tense is used mainly to express an action or state of being that is occurring now.

EXAMPLES

Ashley and Ira wait patiently for the bus. [present]

Ashley and Ira are waiting patiently for the bus. [present progressive]

Ashley and Ira do wait patiently for the bus. [present emphatic]

The present tense is also used

- to show a customary or habitual action or state of being
- to state a general truth--something that is always true
- to summarize the plot or subject matter of a literary work (such use is called the literary present)
- to make a historical event seem current (such use is called the historical present)
- to express future time

EXAMPLES

After school I wash the breakfast dishes and start supper. [customary action]

In the Northern Hemisphere the summer solstice occurs when the sun is farthest from the equator. [general truth]

Countee Cullen uses traditional verse forms to explore African American themes. [literary present]

In 1519, Ferdinand Magellan rounds the southern tip of South America and names the ocean that lies before him the Pacific Ocean. [historical present]

The movie that opens tomorrow runs through next week. [future time]

The Uses of the Past Tense

The past tense is used to express an action or state of being that occurred in the past but did not continue into the present.

EXAMPLES

I stayed at the library until closing time. [past]

I was researching the life of Timothy Thomas Fortune, a civil rights advocate in the 1800s. [past progressive]

My research did provide me with enough information for my paper on Fortune. [past emphatic]

The Uses of the Future Tense

The future tense is used to express an action or a state of being that will occur. The future tense is formed with *will* or *shall* and the verb's infinitive.

EXAMPLES

I will attend the University of Iowa in the fall. [future]
I will be attending the University of Iowa in the fall. [future progressive]

NOTE: A future action or state of being may also be expressed by using

- **the present tense of *be* with *going to* and the infinitive form of a verb**
- **the present tense of *be* with *about to* and the infinitive form of a verb**
- **the present tense of a verb with a word or phrase that expresses future time**

EXAMPLES

My aunt and uncle are going to visit the Philippines.
Mr. Campos is about to open the time capsule.
Finals begin next Monday.

Chapter 6

The Uses of the Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense is used mainly to express an action or a state of being that occurred at some indefinite time in the past. The present perfect tense always includes the helping verb *have* or *has.*

EXAMPLES

I have written to the governor, but I have not received a reply. [present perfect]

Who has been playing my cassettes? [present perfect progressive]

The present perfect tense is also used to express action (or a state of being) that began in the past and continues into the present.

EXAMPLES

The International Sister City program has existed for more than thirty-five years. [present perfect]

The program has been pairing cities in the United States with cities in other nations since 1956. [present perfect progressive]

The Uses of the Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect tense is used mainly to express an action or a state of being that was completed in the past before some other past occurrence. The past perfect tense always includes the helping verb *had.*

EXAMPLES

I finally remembered where I had seen a copy of Rufino Tamayo's mural. [The seeing occurred before the remembering.]

I had been looking through dozens of old magazines before I finally remembered to check the latest issue of *Smithsonian.* [past perfect progressive]

NOTE: Avoid the use of *would have* in *if* clauses that express the earlier of two past actions. Use the past perfect tense.

Nonstandard If he would have taken more time, he would have won.
Standard If he had taken more time, he would have won.

Nonstandard I would not have been late if I would have had a watch.
Standard I would not have been late if I had had a watch.

The Uses of the Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect tense is used to express an action or a state of being that will be completed in the future before some other future occurrence. The future perfect tense always includes *will have* or *shall have.*

EXAMPLES

By the time the bus arrives, we will have waited for an hour. [The waiting will occur before the arrival of the bus.]

By then, we will have been waiting for two hours. [future perfect progressive]

Chapter 6

The Sequence of Tenses

Use tense forms carefully to show the correct relationship between verbs in a sentence.

(a) When describing events that occur at the same time, use verbs in the same tense.

EXAMPLES

The bell rings, and the classroom empties. [present tense]

The bell rang, and the classroom emptied. [past tense]

(b) When describing events that occur at different times, use verbs in different tenses to show the order of events.

EXAMPLES

I play football now, but I played basketball in junior high. [Because I am playing football now, the present tense form *play* is correct. My playing basketball occurred in the past and did not continue into the present; therefore, the past tense is correct.]

Sabrena mentioned that she had invited some of her neighbors to the party. [Because Sabrena made the statement in the past, the past tense form *mentioned* is correct. She invited the neighbors before she made the statement; therefore, the past perfect form *had invited* is correct.]

The tense you use depends on the meaning you want to express.

EXAMPLES

I believe they own the Flamingo Cafe. [Both verbs are in the present tense to indicate that both actions are occurring now.]

I believe they owned the Flamingo Cafe. [The change to the past tense in the second verb implies that they no longer own the Flamingo Cafe.]

Joan said that she worked at the textile mill. [Both verbs are in the past tense to indicate that both actions no longer occur.]

Joan said that she will work at the textile mill. [The change in the second verb implies that Joan did not work at the textile mill when she made the statement but that she planned to work there.]

The Present Participle and the Present Perfect Participle

Present Participle	**Present Perfect Participle**
being	discovering
having been	having discovered

(a) The present participle is used to express an action or a state of being that occurs at the same time as another action or state of being.

EXAMPLES

Receiving word of their freedom in June 1863, former slaves in Texas created the Juneteenth holiday. [The action expressed by *receiving* occurs at the same time as the action expressed by *created.*]

Celebrating Juneteenth this year, my family gathered at my grandmother's house on June 19. [The action expressed by *celebrating* occurs at the same time as the action expressed by *gathered.*]

(b) The present perfect participle is used to express an action or a state of being that comes before another action or state of being.

EXAMPLES

Having missed the midterm exam, I took a makeup test. [The action expressed by *having missed* precedes the action expressed by *took.*]

Having been accepted by several colleges, Rosa chose one. [The action expressed by *having been accepted* precedes the action expressed by *chose.*]

Chapter 7 Correct Use And Placement Of Modifiers

Uses of Modifiers

Use an adjective to modify the subject of a linking verb.

The most common linking verbs are the forms of *be: am, is, are, was, were, be, been,* and *being.* A linking verb is often followed by a predicate adjective--a word that modifies the subject.

Generally, if you can replace the verb with *seems* or *seemed* and the sentence makes sense, it is safe to assume that the verb is a linking verb.

EXAMPLES

Carlos looked happy. [Since *Carlos seemed happy* makes sense, *looked* is being used as a linking verb and calls for the adjective *happy.*]

Carlos looked happily at his latest design. [Since *Carlos seemed happily at his latest design* is absurd, *looked* is being used as an action verb and calls for the adverb *happily.*]

Bad **and** ***Badly***

Bad is an adjective. *Badly* is an adverb. In standard English, only the adjective form should follow a sense verb, such as *feel, see, hear, taste,* or *smell,* or other linking verb.

Nonstandard This leftover chicken smells badly.
Standard This leftover chicken smells bad.

Good and *Well*

Good is an adjective. *Well* may be used as an adjective or an adverb. Avoid using *good* to modify an action verb. Instead, use *well* as an adverb meaning "capably" or "satisfactorily."

Nonstandard The track team did good at the meet.
Standard The track team did well at the meet.

Nonstandard Bao performs good even under pressure.
Standard Bao performs well even under pressure.

As an adjective, *well* means "in good health" or "satisfactory in appearance or condition."

EXAMPLES

Yes, I feel quite well, thank you.
You look well in your new outfit.
All is well with us.

Real and *Really*

Real is an adjective. *Really* is an adverb meaning "actually" or "truly." Although *real* is commonly used as an adverb meaning "very" in everyday situations, avoid its use in formal speaking and writing.

Informal Your new car is real nice.
Formal Your new car is really nice.

Informal He played real well in the tryouts.
Formal He played really well in the tryouts.

Chapter 7

Slow and *Slowly*

Slow is an adjective. *Slowly* is an adverb. Although *slow* is also labeled as an adverb in many dictionaries, this usage applies only to informal situations and colloquial expressions, such as *drive slow* and *go slow.*

Informal She eased slow out of the cockpit.
Formal She eased slowly out of the cockpit.

Comparison of Modifiers (Defined)

Comparison refers to the change in the form of an adjective or an adverb to show increasing or decreasing degrees in the quality that the modifier expresses.

There are three degrees of comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
big	bigger	biggest
eager	more eager	most eager
good	better	best
late	later	latest
swiftly	more swiftly	most swiftly
well	better	best

Regular Comparison

(a) Most one-syllable modifiers form the comparative and superlative degrees by adding *-er* and *-est.*

Positive	**Comparative**	**Superlative**
neat	neater	neatest
warm	warmer	warmest
fast	faster	fastest
long	longer	longest

(b) Some two-syllable modifiers form the comparative and superlative degrees by adding *-er* or *-est.* Other two-syllable modifiers form the comparative and superlative degrees by using *more* and *most.*

Positive	**Comparative**	**Superlative**
gentle	gentler	gentlest
lively	livelier	liveliest
agile	more agile	most agile
clearly	more clearly	most clearly

If you are not sure how a two-syllable modifier is compared, check a dictionary.

(c) Modifiers of more than two syllables form the comparative and superlative degrees by using *more* and *most.*

Positive	**Comparative**	**Superlative**
expensive	more expensive	most expensive
delightful	more delightful	most delightful
quietly	more quietly	most quietly
poetically	more poetically	most poetically

(d) To show a decrease in the qualities they express, all modifiers form the comparative and superlative degrees by using *less* and *least.*

Positive	**Comparative**	**Superlative**
weak	less weak	least weak
useful	less useful	least useful
contentedly	less contentedly	least contentedly
urgently	less urgently	least urgently

Irregular Comparison

Some modifiers do not follow the regular methods of forming the comparative and superlative degrees.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
bad	worse	worst
good	better	best
well	better	best
little	less	least
many	more	most
much	more	most

Chapter 7

Uses of Comparative Forms and Superlative Forms

(a) Use the comparative degree when comparing two things. Use the superlative degree when comparing more than two.

Comparative	Although both Laura and Justin wrote about the development of the Swahili culture, Laura's paper was longer. [comparison of two papers] After listening to both candidates, we concluded that Ms. Garcia was the more highly qualified. [comparison of two candidates]
Superlative	Of the four major river-valley cultures that arose long ago in Africa and Asia, the Huang He was probably the most fully isolated from the others. [comparison of four cultures] I bought this model of car because it gets the best mileage. [comparison of many models]

The superlative degree is also used to compare two things in some idiomatic expressions.

EXAMPLE

Put your best foot forward.

Other and *Else* in Comparisons

Include the word *other* or *else* when comparing one member of a group with the rest of the members.

Nonstandard	Diamond, a crystalline form of carbon, is harder than any mineral in the world. [The diamond is one of the minerals of the world. Logically, the diamond cannot be harder than itself.]
Standard	Diamond, a crystalline form of carbon, is harder than any other mineral in the world.
Nonstandard	Pete has won more races than anyone in his club. [Pete is a member of the club. Logically, he cannot have won more races than himself.]
Standard	Pete has won more races than anyone else in his club.

Double Comparison

Avoid double comparisons. A double comparison is the result of using two comparative forms (usually *-er* and *more*) or using two superlative forms (usually *-est* and *most*) to modify the same word.

Nonstandard	Alice is a more faster swimmer than you.
Standard	Alice is a faster swimmer than you.
Nonstandard	She is the most smartest girl in school.
Standard	She is the smartest girl in school.

Misplaced Modifiers

A modifying phrase or clause that is placed too far from the word it sensibly modifies is called a misplaced modifier. To correct a misplaced modifier, place the phrase or clause as close as possible to the word you intend it to modify.

Misplaced I finished reading the book that Alice Walker wrote about Langston Hughes during spring break. [Did Alice Walker write the book about Langston Hughes during spring break?]
Clear During spring break I finished reading the book that Alice Walker wrote about Langston Hughes.

Misplaced My uncle served us his prize-winning flan filled with a sense of pride. [Was the flan filled with a sense of pride?]
Clear Filled with a sense of pride, my uncle served us his prize-winning flan.

Misplaced The thief tried to run away from the police officer abandoning the stolen car and dashing into the woods. [Was the police officer abandoning the stolen car and dashing into the woods?]
Clear Abandoning the stolen car and dashing into the woods, the thief tried to run away from the police officer.

Misplaced I bought a small computer for the accounting staff, which gave everyone a great deal of trouble. [Did the staff give everyone a great deal of trouble?]
Clear I bought the accounting staff a small computer, which gave everyone a great deal of trouble.

Avoid placing a phrase or clause so that it seems to modify either of two words. Such a misplaced modifier is often called a two-way, or squinting, modifier.

Misplaced Mary said during rehearsal Lori acted nervous. [Did Mary say this about Lori during rehearsal, or did Lori act nervous during rehearsal?]
Clear During rehearsal Mary said Lori acted nervous.
Clear Mary said Lori acted nervous during rehearsal.

Misplaced Tell Marco before he goes to his karate class I want to see him.
Clear Before he goes to his karate class, tell Marco I want to see him.
Clear Tell Marco I want to see him before he goes to his karate class.

Dangling Modifiers

A modifying phrase or clause that does not sensibly modify any word or group of words in the sentence is called a dangling modifier. You may correct a dangling modifier by adding a word that the phrase or clause can sensibly modify, by adding words to the phrase or clause so that its meaning is clear, or by rewording the sentence.

Dangling After reading the article "Keeping America Beautiful," a recycling program was organized in their neighborhood. [Who read the article?]
Clear After reading the article "Keeping America Beautiful," Lus and Olan organized a recycling program in their neighborhood.
Clear After Lus and Olan read the article "Keeping America Beautiful," they organized a recycling program in their neighborhood.

Dangling To win the election, your support will be needed. [Is your support trying to win the election?]
Clear To win the election, I will need your support.
Clear If I am to win the election, I will need your support.

Dangling Representing the conservative viewpoint, the liberals opposed her. [Were the liberals representing the conservative viewpoint?]
Clear Representing the conservative viewpoint, she was opposed by the liberals.
Clear Since she represented the conservative viewpoint, the liberals opposed her.

Dangling Convicted of stealing a loaf of bread for his sister's seven starving children, Jean Valjean's sentence was five years in prison. [Was Jean Valjean's sentence convicted?]
Clear Convicted of stealing a loaf of bread for his sister's seven starving children, Jean Valjean was sentenced to five years in prison.
Clear Jean Valjean was convicted of stealing a loaf of bread for his sister's seven starving children and was sentenced to five years in prison.

NOTE: A few dangling modifiers have become standard idiomatic expressions.

EXAMPLES

Judging from the audience's response, the band's new number will be a big hit.
Relatively speaking, the cost of living remained static for several years.
To be perfectly frank, the rate of inflation is still too high.

Chapter 8 Common Usage Problems

Chapter 8 Topics (A-G)

Chapter 8 COMMON USAGE PROBLEMS

Chapter 8 Topics (H-O)

Chapter 8 COMMON USAGE PROBLEMS

Chapter 8 Topics (P-Z)

a, an

Use *a* before words beginning with a consonant sound. Use *an* before words beginning with a vowel sound.

EXAMPLE

It was an honor and a surprise to receive an award for my work as a hospital volunteer.

accept, except

Accept is a verb meaning "to receive." *Except* may be either a verb or a preposition. As a verb, except means "to leave out." As a preposition, *except* means "excluding."

EXAMPLES

Did you accept the gift?
Did the latest census except homeless people?
We were busy every evening this week except Tuesday. [preposition]

Chapter 8 H-O

affect, effect

Affect is a verb meaning "to influence." As a verb, *effect* means "to bring about" or "to accomplish." As a noun, *effect* means "the result [of an action]."

EXAMPLES

Try not to let unkind remarks affect you.
The school board effected drastic changes in the budget. [verb]
The effects of the hurricane were evident the next day. [noun]

Chapter 8 H-O

all the farther, all the faster

In formal situations, use *as far as* or *as fast as.*

Informal Thirty miles per hour was all the faster the first airplane could travel.
Formal Thirty miles per hour was as fast as the first airplane could travel.

and etc.

Etc. is an abbreviation of the Latin words *et cetera,* meaning "and others" or "and so forth." Consequently, *and* should not be used before *etc.*

EXAMPLE

This unit discusses writers associated with the Harlem Renaissance: Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, etc. [not *and etc.*].

Chapter 8 H-O

and which, but which

The expressions *and which* and *but which* (or *and who, but who*) should be used only when a *which* (or *who*) clause precedes them in the sentence.

Nonstandard	Our jazz band was pleased with the fans' enthusiastic response and which was even greater than we had expected.
Standard	Our jazz band was pleased with the fans' response, which was enthusiastic and which was even greater than we had expected.
Standard	Our jazz band was pleased with the fans' enthusiastic response, which was even greater than we had expected.

Chapter 8 H-O

anyways, anywheres

Omit the final *s* from these words and others like them (*everywheres, nowheres, somewheres*).

EXAMPLE

> I couldn't find my keys anywhere [not *anywheres*]; I looked everywhere [not *everywheres*], but they were nowhere [not *nowheres*] in the house.

Chapter 8 H-O

at

Avoid using *at* after a construction beginning with *where.*

Nonstandard	Where do most Navajo live at now?
Standard	Where do most Navajo live now?

Chapter 8 H-O

because

In formal situations, do not use the construction *reason . . . because*. Instead, use *reason . . . that.*

Informal	The reason I'm late is because my car had a flat tire.
Formal	The reason I'm late is that my car had a flat tire. [This sentence can also be revised to make the statement more directly: *I'm late because my car had a flat tire.*]

Chapter 8 H-O

being as, being that

Avoid using either of these expressions for *since* or *because*.

EXAMPLE

Because [not *Being as*] Elena lived in Mexico until she was almost eight years old, she can speak both Spanish and English quite fluently.

Chapter 8 H-O

between, among

Use *between* when referring to only two items or to more than two when each item is being compared individually to each of the others.

EXAMPLES

The final chess match was between Anne and Lisa.

Don't you know the difference between mambo, salsa, and merengue? [*Between* is used because each dance is compared individually to each of the other dances; in other words, the dances are compared two at a time.]

Use *among* when you are referring to more than two items and are not considering each item in relation to each other item individually.

EXAMPLE

College admissions offices must decide among thousands of qualified applicants.

bring, take

Bring means "to come carrying something." *Take* means "to go carrying something."

EXAMPLES

I'll bring my collection of Black Heritage postage stamps for the Black History Month display.

Please take the recycling bin out to the curb when you leave for school.

Chapter 8 H-O

bust, busted

Avoid using these words as verbs. Use a form of *break* or *burst,* depending on the meaning.

EXAMPLES

How did your glasses get broken [not *busted*]?
My car's radiator hose burst [not *busted*].

Chapter 8 H-O

fewer, less

Use *fewer,* which tells how many, to modify a plural noun. Use *less,* which tells how much, to modify a singular noun.

EXAMPLES

I worked fewer hours this week than last week.
I worked less time this week than last week.

Chapter 8 H-O

had ought, hadn't ought

Do not use *had* or *hadn't* with *ought.*

Nonstandard	You had ought to be more patient.
Standard	You ought to be more patient.
Nonstandard	I hadn't ought to spend any more money.
Standard	I ought not to spend any more money.

Chapter 8 H-O

he, she, it, they

Do not use an unnecessary pronoun after its antecedent when the antecedent is a subject. Such an error is called the double subject.

Nonstandard	Faith Ringgold, who was recently featured in a one-woman show, she designs remarkable story quilts.
Standard	Faith Ringgold, who was recently featured in a one-woman show, designs remarkable story quilts.

Chapter 8 H-O

hisself, theirselves

Avoid using these words for *himself* and *themselves.*

EXAMPLE

Lou built the shed himself [not *hisself*].

in, into

In means "within." *Into* means "from the outside to the inside." In formal situations, avoid using *in* for *into.*

Informal	Feeling nervous, Jim opened the door and walked in the personnel office.
Formal	Feeling nervous, Jim opened the door and walked into the personnel office.

Chapter 8 H-O

kind(s), sort(s), type(s)

With the singular form of each of these nouns, use *this* or *that.* With the plural form, use *these* or *those.*

EXAMPLE

This kind of package is recyclable, but those kinds are not.

kind of, sort of

In formal situations, avoid using *kind of* for the adverb *somewhat* or *rather.*

Informal You look kind of worried.
Formal You look rather [or *somewhat*] worried.

Chapter 8 H-O

kind of a, sort of a

In formal situations, omit the *a.*

Informal	What kind of a car is that?
Formal	What kind of car is that?

Chapter 8 H-O

learn, teach

Learn means "to gain knowledge." *Teach* means "to provide with knowledge."

EXAMPLE

If you will teach me how to play the guitar, I will learn some traditional Mexican folk songs.

like, as

Like is a preposition. In formal situations, do not use *like* for the conjunction *as* to introduce a subordinate clause.

Informal The plan worked like they thought it would.
Formal The plan worked as they thought it would.

like, as if

In formal situations, avoid using the preposition *like* for the conjunction *as if* or *as though* to introduce a subordinate clause.

Informal I feel like I have the flu.
Formal I feel as if [or *as though*] I have the flu.

of

Of is a preposition. Do not use *of* in place of *have* after verbs such as *could, should, would, might, must,* and *ought [to*]. Also, do not use *had of* for *had.*

Nonstandard	You could of told me that you were going to be late.
Standard	You could've told me that you were going to be late.
Nonstandard	You ought to of seen the look on his face.
Standard	You ought to have seen the look on his face.
Nonstandard	If I had of known that the party was casual, I wouldn't of worn this dressy outfit.
Standard	If I had known that the party was casual, I wouldn't have worn this dressy outfit.

Avoid using *of* after other prepositions such as *inside, off,* and *outside.*

EXAMPLE

Leslie turned off [not *off of*] the parkway.

off, off of

Do not use *off* or *off of* for *from.*

Nonstandard	I got some good advice off that mechanic.
Standard	I got some good advice from that mechanic.

Chapter 8 H-O

or, nor

Use *or* with *either;* use *nor* with *neither.*

EXAMPLES

Either Celia Cruz or Gloria Estefan will host the awards show.
Neither Gwen nor Lily has been absent this term.

some, somewhat

In formal situations, avoid using *some* to mean "to some extent." Use *somewhat.*

Informal Tensions between East and West began to ease some.
Formal Tensions between East and West began to ease somewhat.

Chapter 8 P-Z

sort(s)

See either of these topics:

kind(s), sort(s), type(s)
kind of a, sort of a

Chapter 8 P-Z

than, then

Than is a conjunction used in comparisons. *Then* is an adverb telling when.

EXAMPLES

Tyrone is more studious than I am.

Take your diploma in your left hand and shake hands with the principal; then leave the stage and return to your seat.

Chapter 8 P-Z

them

Do not use *them* as an adjective. Use *those.*

EXAMPLE

Have you seen those [not *them*] murals by Judith Baca at the art museum?

Chapter 8 P-Z

this here, that there

Avoid using *here* or *there* after *this* or *that.*

EXAMPLE

This [not *This here*] magazine has an article about Japanese koto player Kazue Sawai.

Chapter 8 P-Z

ways

Use *way,* not *ways,* when referring to distance.

Informal	At dusk we were still a long ways from home.
Formal	At dusk we were still a long way from home.

Chapter 8 P-Z

when, where

Do not use *when* or *where* to begin a definition.

Nonstandard	A hurricane is when a tropical cyclone has winds greater than 75 miles per hour.
Standard	A hurricane is a tropical cyclone that has winds greater than 75 miles per hour.
Nonstandard	An implosion is where something bursts inward.
Standard	An implosion is an inward burst.

Chapter 8 P-Z

where

Do not use *where* for *that.*

EXAMPLE

I read that [not *where*] the Smithsonian Institution has preserved more than one thousand of William H. Johnson's paintings.

Chapter 8 P-Z

who, which, that

Who refers to persons only. *Which* refers to things only. *That* may refer to either persons or things.

EXAMPLES

Shah Jehan was the Indian king who [or *that*] built the Taj Mahal.

The monument, which is the tomb of the king's wife, is adorned with verses from the Koran.

Have you seen any pictures of this building that symbolizes India for so many people in other lands?

Chapter 8 P-Z

The Double Negative

A double negative is a construction in which two negative words are used where one is enough.

Common Negative Words

barely	never	not (-n't)
but (meaning "only")	no	nothing
	nobody	nowhere
hardly	none	only
neither	no one	scarcely

Nonstandard She has never missed none of Toni Morrison's books.
Standard She has never missed any of Toni Morrison's books.
Standard She has missed none of Toni Morrison's books.

Nonstandard I have not said nothing about your plans.
Standard I have not said anything about your plans.
Standard I have said nothing about your plans.

Nonstandard I hadn't never heard Estonian music before.
Standard I hadn't ever heard Estonian music before.
Standard I had never heard Estonian music before.

NOTE: Avoid the common error of using *-n't,* the contraction of *not,* with another negative word, such as *barely, hardly,* or *scarcely.*

Nonstandard I can't hardly see anything in this fog.
Standard I can hardly see anything in this fog.

Nonstandard Our lunch break was so short that we didn't scarcely have time to eat.
Standard Our lunch break was so short that we scarcely had time to eat.

The words *but* and *only* are negative when they are used as adverbs meaning *no more than.* In such cases, the use of another negative word with *but* or *only* is considered informal.

Informal I don't have but one pair of dress shoes.
Formal I have but one pair of dress shoes.
Formal I have only one pair of dress shoes.

Chapter 8 P-Z

Chapter 9 Spelling

Words with *ie* and *ei*

(a) Write *ie* when the sound is long *e,* except after *c.*

EXAMPLES

thief	believe	field
ceiling	receive	deceive

EXCEPTIONS

seize	either	weird
leisure	neither	

(b) Write *ei* when the sound is not long *e,* especially when the sound is *a.*

EXAMPLES

forfeit	neighbor	freight
height	weigh	

EXCEPTIONS

ancient	conscience	mischief
friend	view	

Words with *-cede, -ceed,* and *-sede*

The only English word that ends in *-sede* is *supersede*. The only words ending in *-ceed* are *exceed, proceed,* and *succeed.* All other words with this sound end in *-cede.*

EXAMPLES

accede	concede	intercede
precede	recede	secede

Adding Prefixes

A prefix is one, or more than one, letter or syllable added to the beginning of a word to create a new word that has a different meaning.

When adding a prefix, do not change the spelling of the original word.

EXAMPLES

a + moral = amoral	il + legal = illegal
mis + spell = misspell	in + elegant = inelegant
re + print = reprint	im + movable = immovable
over + run = overrun	un + necessary = unnecessary

Chapter 9

Adding the Suffix *-ness* or *-ly*

When adding the suffix *-ness* or *-ly,* do not change the spelling of the original word.

EXAMPLES

mean + ness = meanness final + ly = finally
open + ness = openness social + ly = socially

EXCEPTIONS

For most words ending in *y,* change the *y* to *i* before adding *-ness* or *-ly:*
heavy + ness = heaviness
ready + ly = readily
happy + ness = happiness
busy + ly = busily

NOTE: For one-syllable adjectives ending in *y,* simply add *-ness.*

EXAMPLES

dry + ness = dryness shy + ly = shyly

Adding Suffixes to Words Ending in Silent *e*

(a) Drop the final silent *e* before a suffix beginning with a vowel.

EXAMPLES

care + ing = caring use + able = usable
active + ity = activity large + er = larger

EXCEPTIONS

Keep the final silent *e*

- in a word ending in *-ce* or *-ge* before a suffix beginning with *a* or *o:* noticeable, courageous
- in *dye* and in *singe* before *-ing:* dyeing, singeing
- in *mile* before *-age:* mileage

(b) Keep the final silent *e* before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

EXAMPLES

use + less = useless care + ful = careful
nine + ty = ninety amuse + ment = amusement

EXCEPTIONS

nine + th = ninth argue + ment = argument
true + ly = truly judge + ment = judgment
awe + ful = awful whole + ly = wholly
acknowledge + ment = acknowledgment *or* acknowledgement

Adding Suffixes to Words Ending in *y*

(a) For words ending in *y* preceded by a consonant, change the *y* to *i* before adding any suffix that does not begin with *i.*

EXAMPLES

funny + er = funnier	twenty + eth = twentieth
reply + ed = replied	reply + ing = replying

NOTE: Some one-syllable words do not follow this rule.

EXAMPLES

dryness	slyly

(b) For words ending in *y* preceded by a vowel, keep the *y* when adding any suffix.

EXAMPLES

gray + est = grayest	convey + ing = conveying
pay + ment = payment	employ + ed = employed

EXCEPTIONS

lay--laid	pay--paid
say--said	day--daily

Doubling the Final Consonants Before Suffixes

Double the final consonant before adding a suffix that begins with a vowel if the word (1) has only one syllable or has the accent on the final syllable, and (2) ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel.

EXAMPLES

slim + er = slimmer prefer + ing = preferring
excel + ed = excelled forget + able = forgettable

Do not double the final consonant unless the word satisfies both of the conditions.

EXAMPLES

benefit + ed = benefited [*Benefit* ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel but does not have the accent on the final syllable.]

select + ing = selecting [*Select* has the accent on the final syllable but does not end in a single consonant.]

When a word satisfies both conditions but the addition of the suffix causes the accent to shift, do not double the final consonant.

EXAMPLES

refer + ence = reference prefer + able = preferable

EXCEPTIONS

excel--excellent, excellence, excellency

NOTE: **The final consonant of some words may or may not be doubled. Either spelling is acceptable.**

EXAMPLES

cancel + ed = canceled *or* cancelled
travel + ing = traveling *or* travelling
program + er = programer *or* programmer

Forming the Plurals of Nouns

For most nouns, add *-s.*

Singular	artist	song	lake
	flower	muscle	Wilson
Plural	artists	songs	lakes
	flowers	muscles	Wilsons

Chapter 9

Forming the Plurals of Nouns Ending in *s, x, z, ch,* or *sh*

For nouns ending in *s, x, z, ch,* or *sh,* add *-es.*

Singular	dress	box	waltz
	birch	bush	Ruíz
Plural	dresses	boxes	waltzes
	birches	bushes	Ruízes

Chapter 9

Forming the Plurals of Nouns Ending in *y*

(a) For nouns ending in *y* preceded by a vowel, add *-s.*

Singular	monkey	journey	essay
	decoy	alley	Friday
Plural	monkeys	journeys	essays
	decoys	alleys	Fridays

(b) For nouns ending in *y* preceded by a consonant, change the *y* to *i* and add *-es.*

Singular	fly	enemy	lady
	trophy	ally	theory
Plural	flies	enemies	ladies
	trophies	allies	theories

For most proper nouns, add *-s.*

EXAMPLES

Brady--Bradys Mallory--Mallorys

(c) For some nouns ending in *f* or *fe*, add *-s.* For others, change the *f* or *fe* to *v* and add *-es.*

Singular	roof	chief	carafe
	knife	loaf	wharf
Plural	roofs	chiefs	carafes
	knives	loaves	wharves

For proper nouns, add *-s.*

EXAMPLES

Cardiff--Cardiffs Wolfe--Wolfes

Forming the Plurals of Nouns Ending in *o*

(a) For nouns ending in *o* preceded by a vowel, add *-s.*

Singular	radio	studio	cameo
	stereo	igloo	Matsuo
Plural	radios	studios	cameos
	stereos	igloos	Matsuos

(b) For many nouns ending in *o* preceded by a consonant, add *-es.*

Singular	tomato	potato	hero
	veto	torpedo	echo
Plural	tomatoes	potatoes	heroes
	vetoes	torpedoes	echoes

For some common nouns, especially those referring to music, and for proper nouns, add *-s.*

Singular	burrito	silo	photo
	piano	soprano	Navajo
Plural	burritos	silos	photos
	pianos	sopranos	Navajos

NOTE: For some nouns ending in *o* preceded by a consonant, you may add either *-s* or *-es.*

Singular	motto	tornado	mosquito
	zero	banjo	
Plural	mottos	tornados	mosquitos
	zeros	banjos	
		or	
	mottoes	tornadoes	mosquitoes
	zeroes	banjoes	

Forming the Plurals of Compound Nouns

(a) For most compound nouns, form the plural of only the last word of the compound.

Singular	Plural
seat belt	seat belts
two-year-old	two-year-olds
bookshelf	bookshelves
baby sitter	baby sitters

(b) For compound nouns in which one of the words is modified by the other word or words, form the plural of the word modified.

Singular	Plural
sister-in-law	sisters-in-law
passer-by	passers-by
runner-up	runners-up
senior citizen	senior citizens

NOTE: Some compound nouns have two acceptable plural forms.

Singular	Plural
attorney general	attorney generals
court-martial	court-martial
notary public	notary publics or attorneys general courts-martial notaries public

Forming the Plurals of Nouns Borrowed from Other Languages

(a) For some nouns borrowed from other languages, the plural is formed as in the original languages.

Singular	alumnus [male]	alumna [female]
	phenomenon	
Plural	alumni [male]	alumnae [female]
	phenomena	

(b) A few nouns borrowed from other languages have two acceptable plural forms. For each of the following nouns, the plural form preferred in English is given first.

Singular	index	appendix
	formula	cactus
Plural	indexes	appendixes
	formulas	cactuses
	or	
	indices	appendices
	formulae	cacti

NOTE: **Whenever you are in doubt about which spelling to use, remember that a dictionary usually lists the preferred spelling first.**

Irregular Plural Forms

The plural of a few nouns is formed irregularly.

Singular	mouse goose	woman foot	tooth child
Plural	mice geese	women feet	teeth children

Chapter 9

Forming the Plurals of Figures, Letters, Signs, and of Words Used as Words

To form the plurals of figures, of most uppercase letters, of signs, and of most words referred to as words, add an *-s* or both an apostrophe and an *-s.*

Singular	*5*	1990	*B* +	*and*
Plural	*5* s	1990s	*B* s + s	*and* s
			or	
	5 's	1990's	*B* 's	+ 's *and* 's

To prevent confusion, add both an apostrophe and an *-s* to form the plural of all lowercase letters, certain uppercase letters, and some words referred to as words.

EXAMPLES

The word *Philippines* contains three *p*'s and three *i*'s. [Both letters are lowercase.]

Most of her grades are A's. [Without an apostrophe the plural of *A* could be confused with the word *As.*]

In the last paragraph of your story, I can't tell which women the *her*'s refer to. [Without an apostrophe the plural of the word *her* could be confused with the word *hers.*]

Chapter 9

Writing Numbers

(a) Spell out a cardinal number--a number that states how many--that can be expressed in one or two words. Otherwise, use numerals.

EXAMPLES

thirteen seniors	forty-four days
one thousand books	346 seniors
365 days	1,345 books

Do not spell out some numbers and use numerals for others in the same context. If numerals are required for any of the numbers, use numerals for all of the numbers.

Inconsistent The Congress of the United States is composed of one hundred senators and 435 representatives.

Consistent The Congress of the United States is composed of 100 senators and 435 representatives.

However, to distinguish between numbers appearing beside each other, spell out one number and use numerals for the other.

EXAMPLE

We bought seven 15-pound sacks.

(b) Spell out a number that begins a sentence.

EXAMPLE

Four hundred twenty-one students participated in the contest.

If a number appears awkward when spelled out, revise the sentence so that it does not begin with the number.

Awkward Two hundred twenty-three thousand six hundred thirty-one votes were cast in the election.

Improved In the election, 223,631 votes were cast.

(c) Spell out an ordinal number--a number that expresses order.

EXAMPLES

Junko Tabei, the first [not *1st*] woman who climbed Mount Everest, was born in Japan in 1940.

Of the fifty states, Tennessee ranks thirty-fourth [not *34th*] in total land area.

(d) Use numerals to express numbers in conventional situations.

Type Of Number	**Examples**		
Identification Numbers	Room 12 Channel 4	pages 246--315 State Road 541	Model 19--A lines 3--19
Measurements	72 degrees	612 yards	32.7 ounces
Statistics	14 percent	84 years old	ratio of 6 to 1
Dates	July 4, 1776	1200 b.c.	a.d. 2000
Times of Day	8:20 p.m.	7:35 a.m.	
Addresses	345 Lexington Dr., Tampa, FL 33628-4533		

NOTE: **Spell out a number used with *o'clock.***

EXAMPLE

ten o'clock

Chapter 9

Chapter 10 Capitalization

First Words

(a) Capitalize the first word of every sentence.

EXAMPLE

Reading the article, I learned about the Blessingway and other traditional Navajo ceremonies.

(b) Capitalize the first word of a sentence following a colon.

EXAMPLE

The committee issued the following statement: In light of these statistics, we recommend that four-way stop signs be installed.

(c) Capitalize the first word of a resolution following the word *Resolved.*

EXAMPLE

Resolved: That government support of the arts be increased.

(d) Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation.

EXAMPLE

When he surrendered in 1877, Chief Joseph declared, "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

When quoting from another writer's work, do not capitalize the first word of the quotation unless the other writer has capitalized it.

EXAMPLE

In his speech of surrender in 1877, Chief Joseph declared that he would "fight no more forever."

(e) Traditionally, the first word in a line of poetry is capitalized.

EXAMPLE

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.
Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Eagle"

For reasons of style, some writers do not follow this rule. When quoting from another writer's work, always follow the style of the writer.

(f) Capitalize the first word of a statement or question inserted in a sentence without quotation marks.

EXAMPLE

My question is, Will this action solve the problem?

Pronoun *I* and Interjection *O*

Capitalize the pronoun *I* and the interjection *O.*

The interjection *O* is usually used for invocations and is followed by the name of the person or thing being addressed. Don't confuse *O* with the common interjection *oh,* which is capitalized only when it appears at the beginning of a sentence and is usually followed by a mark of punctuation.

EXAMPLES

Where could I have put my book report?
Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!
He was driving, oh, about thirty-five miles an hour.

Chapter 10

Proper Nouns and Proper Adjectives

Capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives.

A common noun names any one of a group of persons, places, or things. A proper noun names a particular person, place, or thing. A proper adjective is formed from a proper noun.

Common Nouns	**Proper Nouns**	**Proper Adjectives**
king	King Arthur	Arthurian legend
country	Thailand	Thai restaurant
city	Moscow	Muscovite voters
people	Algonquians	Algonquian customs

In proper nouns made up of two or more words, do not capitalize articles (*a, an, the*), short prepositions (those with fewer than five letters, such as *at, of, for, with*), or coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet*).

EXAMPLE

International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Some proper nouns and proper adjectives have lost their capitals after long usage.

EXAMPLES

creole sauce china (dishes)

Others may be written with or without capitals.

EXAMPLES

Roman (roman) numerals
Venetian (venetian) blinds

If you're not sure whether to capitalize a word, check an up-to-date dictionary.

Names of Persons

(a) Capitalize the names of persons.

Given Names	Jamal	Christina	Yoshi
	Alicia	Marco	
Surnames	Tseng	Youngblood	Johnson
	Martinez	Costner	

NOTE: Some names may contain more than one capital letter. If you are not sure about the spelling of a name, check with the person or consult a reference source.

EXAMPLES

De La Renta	de la Renta
Von Ryan	von Ryan
Morning Star	Morningstar
La Fontaine	Lafontaine

(b) Capitalize the abbreviations *Jr.* and *Sr.* following a name.

EXAMPLES

Martin Luther King, Jr. John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

NOTE: The abbreviations of other titles such as *Mr., Dr., Gen., RN,* and *Ph.D.* are also capitalized.

Geographical Names

Capitalize geographical names.

Type Of Name	Examples	
Towns and Cities	Pigeon Forge San Juan	Manila
Counties and Townships	Maricopa County Concord Township	Orleans Parish
States	Alaska	South Carolina
Regions	the South New England	Western Hemisphere

NOTE: **Words such as *north, eastern,* and *southwestern* are not capitalized when indicating direction.**

EXAMPLES

flying south for the winter
living in the western part of the state

Type Of Name	Examples
Countries	Zimbabwe Saudi Arabia
Continents	Antarctica North America
Islands	Isle of Wight Solomon Islands
Mountains	Mount St. Helens Sierra Madre Pobeda Peak Sugarloaf Mountain
Other Land Forms and Features	Painted Desert Palo Duro Canyon Ouachita National Forest Dismal Swamp Keweenaw Peninsula
Bodies of Water	Indian Ocean Amazon River Lake Huron Persian Gulf Dead Sea Guanabara Bay
Parks	Lake Clark National Park Yellowstone National Park
Roads, Streets, and Highways	Raintree Road Route 66 Interstate 10

Quail Briar Drive
Fifth Avenue
East Third Street
Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard

NOTE: In addresses, abbreviations such as *St., Blvd., Ave., Dr.,* and *Ln.* are capitalized.

NOTE: The second word in a hyphenated number begins with a lowercase letter.

EXAMPLE

Twenty-second Street

Chapter 10

Names of Organizations

Capitalize the names of organizations, teams, business firms, institutions, buildings, and government bodies.

Type Of Name	**Examples**
Organizations	National Collegiate Athletic Association
	League of Women Voters
Teams	Detroit Red Wings
	San Antonio Spurs
Business Firms	Procter and Gamble Company
	International Business Machines
Institutions	Beverly Hills High School
	Massachusetts General Hospital
Buildings	Shubert Theater
	Plaza Hotel
Government Bodies	House of Representatives
	Federal Aviation Administration
	Peace Corps

NOTE: **The names of organizations, businesses, and government bodies are often abbreviated to a series of capital letters.**

EXAMPLES

National Organization for Women	NOW
American Telephone & Telegraph	AT&T

Usually the letters in such abbreviations are not followed by periods, but always check an up-to-date dictionary or other reliable source to be sure.

NOTE: **Do not capitalize words such as *democratic* and *republican* when they refer to principles or forms of government. Capitalize such words only when they refer to the political parties.**

EXAMPLES

a democratic policy
the Democratic Party (*or* party)

Names of Particular Events and Periods

Capitalize the names of historical events and periods, special events, and holidays and other calendar items.

Type Of Name	Examples	
Historical Events and Periods	Renaissance	Elizabethan Age
	Vietnam War	American Revolution
Special Events	Super Bowl	Special Olympics
	Conference on World Hunger	
Holidays and Other Calendar Items	Labor Day	Fourth of July
	Monday	Hispanic Heritage Month
	December	

NOTE: **Do not capitalize the name of a season unless it is part of a proper noun or unless the season is being personified.**

EXAMPLES

an early winter
the Suncoast Summer Festival
"O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being. . . ."
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"

Names of Nationalities, Races, Peoples

Capitalize the names of nationalities, races, and peoples.

EXAMPLES

Asian	Caucasian	Norse
Ojibwa	Zulu	Hispanic
Aztec	African American	

Chapter 10

Names of Religions

Capitalize the names of religions and their followers, holy days and celebrations, holy writings, and specific deities.

Type Of Name	Examples	
Religions and	Christianity	Judaism
Followers	Buddhist	Methodist
Holy Days and	Christmas	Ramadan
Celebrations	Purim	Potlatch
Holy Writings	Talmud	New Testament
	Veda	Koran
Specific Deities	Allah	Jehovah
	God	Brahma

NOTE: **The words *god* and *goddess* are not capitalized when they refer to deities of ancient mythology. The names of specific mythological deities are capitalized, however.**

EXAMPLE

Cassandra could foretell the future but was condemned by the god Apollo never to be believed.

NOTE: **Some writers always capitalize pronouns that refer to the Deity. Other writers capitalize such pronouns only if necessary to prevent confusion.**

EXAMPLE

The priest asked God to bring peace to His people.

Brand Names

Capitalize the brand names of business products.

EXAMPLES

- Nintendo video game
- Jif peanut butter

Notice that the names of the types of products are not capitalized.

Chapter 10

Names of Particular Things and Places

Capitalize the names of ships, trains, aircraft, spacecraft, monuments, awards, planets, and any other particular things and places.

Type Of Name	Examples
Ships	*Merrimac*
	Cunard Princess
Trains	*Orient Express*
	North Coast Limited
Aircraft	*Spirit of St. Louis*
	Air Force One
Spacecraft	*Atlantis*
	Apollo 11
Monuments	Lincoln Memorial
	Statue of Liberty
Awards	Academy Award
	Pulitzer Prize
Planets, Stars, Constellations	Neptune
	Sirius
	Big Dipper
	Cassiopeia
	Mercury
	Canis Major

NOTE: **The words *sun* and *moon* are rarely capitalized. Do not capitalize the word *earth* unless it is used along with the name of another heavenly body that is capitalized.**

EXAMPLES

gazing at the sun, moon, and stars
below the surface of the earth
the distance between Venus and Earth

Names of Languages and Specific Course

Do not capitalize the names of school subjects, except for course names followed by a number and for the names of languages.

EXAMPLES

art	algebra	chemistry
Art 102	Algebra I	Chemistry II
English	Spanish	German

NOTE: **As a rule, nouns identified by a number or letter are capitalized.**

EXAMPLES

Room 31	Parlor B
School District 18	Chapter 4

Do not capitalize the class name *senior, junior, sophomore,* or *freshman* unless it is part of a proper noun.

EXAMPLES

The juniors and the seniors will hold their talent show on May 4.
The Junior-Senior Revue will be held on May 4.

Titles

(a) Capitalize a title belonging to a particular person when it comes before the person's name.

EXAMPLES

Captain Valdés	Justice O'Connor
Senator Inouye	President White Feather

Generally, do not capitalize a title used alone or following a person's name.

EXAMPLES

the captain of the ship
every justice of the U.S. Supreme Court
Daniel Inouye, a senator from Hawaii
Uta White Feather, the class president

For clarity or special emphasis, you may capitalize a title used alone or following a person's name. In addition, a few titles are always capitalized. If you are unsure of whether to capitalize a title, check in a dictionary.

EXAMPLES

Both the President and the Vice President met with Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel.
The Surgeon General explained HIV testing to us.

Generally, capitalize a title when using it alone in direct address.

EXAMPLES

Goodbye, Professor.
Thank you, Sir [*or* sir].

NOTE: Do not capitalize *ex-, -elect, former,* and *late* when using them with titles.

EXAMPLES

governor-elect
ex-President Reagan

(b) Capitalize a word showing a family relationship when the word is used with a person's name but not when it is preceded by a possessive.

EXAMPLES

Uncle Juan	Cousin Denisa	Grandfather Ewing
your mother	my aunt Eunice	Jay's cousin Ramon

NOTE: A word showing a family relationship is capitalized when used in place of a person's name.

EXAMPLE

I think that someone must have told Grandma about the surprise party.

(c) Capitalize the first and last words and other important words in titles of books, periodicals, poems, stories, plays, historical documents, movies, radio and television

programs, works of art, and musical compositions.

Unimportant words within titles are

- articles (*a, an, the*)
- short prepositions (those with fewer than five letters, such as *in, of, to, for, from, with*)
- coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet*)

Type Of Title	**Examples**
Books	*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
	The Death of the Moth and Other Essays
Periodicals	*San Diego Tribune*
	People Weekly
Poems	"Ode on a Grecian Urn"
	I Am Joaquín
Stories	"The Old Man at the Bridge"
	"The Train from Rhodesia"
Plays	*The Merchant of Venice*
	A Land Beyond the River
Historical Documents	Declaration of Independence
	Magna Carta
Movies	*It's a Wonderful Life*
	Dances with Wolves
Radio and TV Programs	*Billboard's Top 40 Countdown*
	The Tonight Show
Works of Art	*Nike of Samothrace* [sculpture]
	I and the Village [painting]
Musical Compositions	*My Fair Lady*
	"The Sky Is Crying"

NOTE: **The article *the* is often written before a title but is not capitalized unless it is the first word of the title.**

EXAMPLES

the *Science Digest*	the *St. Louis Dispatch*
The Count of Monte Cristo	*The Spectator*

Chapter 11 Punctuation

Periods

(a) Use a period at the end of a statement.

EXAMPLES

Mexico City is the home of the Ballet Folklorico.

"My words are like the stars that never change."

Chief Seattle, "Speech of Chief Seattle"

(b) Use a period at the end of a request or a mild command.

Use an exclamation point at the end of a strong command.

EXAMPLES

Please write me a letter. [request]

Call this number in case of an emergency. [mild command]

Hold that line! [strong command]

(c) Use a period at the end of most abbreviations.

Names of Persons	Ida B. Wells	E. M. Forster	
Titles Used with Names	Mr.	Mrs.	Ms.
	Dr.	Jr.	Sr.
Kinds of Organizations	Co.	Inc.	Corp.
	Assn.	Ltd.	

NOTE: Commonly known abbreviations for the names of organizations and services in areas such as government, education, and broadcasting media are written without periods. Each letter of the abbreviation is capitalized.

EXAMPLES

FBI	ZIP	ROTC	PTA
MTV	BBC	PBS	

Parts of Addresses	Ave.	St.	Rd.
	Blvd.	P.O. Box	
Names of States	Ala.	Del.	Neb.
	Ky.	S. Dak.	

NOTE: A two-letter state abbreviation without periods is used when it is followed by a ZIP code. Each letter of the abbreviation is capitalized and no comma separates the abbreviation from the ZIP code.

EXAMPLE

Tampa, FL 33624

NOTE: Abbreviations for metric units of measure are usually written without periods.

EXAMPLES

mm

kg

ml

When an abbreviation with a period is written at the end of a sentence, another period is not

used as an end mark. However, a question mark or an exclamation point is used as needed.

EXAMPLES

The Méndezes are moving to Broken Arrow, Okla.
Are the Méndezes moving to Broken Arrow, Okla.?

Chapter 11

Question Marks

(a) Use a question mark at the end of a question.

EXAMPLES

When will Terrell prepare the wild rice?

Have you read Lorraine Hansberry's *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*?

(b) Do not use a question mark after a declarative sentence containing an indirect question.

Indirect Question	Mariana wants to know when Junko Tabei climbed Mount Everest.
Question	When did Junko Tabei climb Mount Everest?

(c) Use either a question mark or a period at the end of a request in question form.

EXAMPLE

Would you please return these books to the library?

or

Would you please return these books to the library.

Exclamation Points

Use an exclamation point at the end of an exclamation.

EXAMPLES

What a talented artist Frida Kahlo was!
I can't stand that noise!

NOTE: **An interjection at the beginning of a sentence is usually followed by a comma but may be followed by an exclamation point.**

Customary	Ah, there you are!
Rare	Ah! There you are!

Commas: Items in a Series

(a) Use commas to separate items in a series.

EXAMPLES

She had been a correspondent for the wire service in London, Paris, Rome, and Madrid. [words]

I studied for the test on the way to school, during homeroom, and in study hall. [phrases]

The reporter wanted to know who I was, where I went to school, and how I felt about getting my driver's license. [clauses]

(b) Do not use a comma before the first item or after the final item in a series.

Incorrect The students in auto mechanics class learned, to replace the spark plugs, check the fluid levels, and change the oil, in several makes of cars.

Correct The students in auto mechanics class learned to replace the spark plugs, check the fluid levels, and change the oil in several makes of cars.

NOTE: Words customarily used in pairs are set off as one item in a series, such as *bag and baggage, law and order,* and *macaroni and cheese.*

EXAMPLE

For supper they served a tossed salad, spaghetti and meatballs, garlic bread, milk, and fruit.

(c) If all the items in a series are joined by *and, or,* or *nor,* do not use commas to separate them.

EXAMPLE

Derrick and Han and Jina will represent the senior class.

Commas: Adjectives Before a Noun

(a) Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives preceding a noun.

EXAMPLES

Katherine Dunham is a creative, talented choreographer.

Did you see that boring, silly, worthless movie?

(b) Do not use a comma before the final adjective in a series if the adjective is thought of as part of the noun.

EXAMPLES

Lawanda hung colorful, delicate Chinese lanterns around the patio. [*Chinese lanterns* is thought of as one word.]

It was a crisp, clear fall day. [*Fall day* is considered one item.]

You can use two tests to determine whether an adjective and a noun form a unit.

TEST 1: Insert the word *and* between the adjectives. If *and* fits sensibly between the adjectives, use a comma. In the first example above, *and* fits logically between the first two adjectives (*crisp* and *clear*) but not between *clear* and *fall.*

TEST 2: Change the order of the adjectives. If the order of the adjectives can be reversed sensibly, use a comma. *Clear, crisp fall day* makes sense, but *clear, fall, crisp day* does not.

Commas: Independent Clauses

Use a comma before *and, but, or, nor, for, so,* and *yet* when they join independent clauses.

EXAMPLES

The sky looks clear, yet rain has been forecast.

I saw a performance of August Wilson's *Fences,* and now I am eager to read his other plays.

NOTE: **Always use a comma before *for, so,* or *yet* joining independent clauses. You may omit the comma before *and, but, or,* or *nor* whenever the independent clauses are very short and the sentence will not be confusing or awkward without the comma.**

EXAMPLES

We didn't enjoy the film but you might. [clear without comma]

I will work with Emma and Josh will help Madison. [awkward without comma]

I will work with Emma, and Josh will help Madison. [clear with comma]

Don't confuse a compound sentence with a simple sentence that has a compound verb.

Compound Sentence	Ashley and I looked everywhere for the sheet music, but we couldn't find it. [two independent clauses]
Simple Sentence	Ashley and I looked everywhere for the sheet music but couldn't find it. [one independent clause with a compound verb]

Commas: Nonessential Elements

Use commas to set off nonessential clauses and nonessential participial phrases. A nonessential (or nonrestrictive) clause or participial phrase contains information that is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

Nonessential Clause	Carla Harris, who was offered scholarships to three colleges, will go to Vassar in the fall.
Nonessential Phrase	Antonio, following his grandmother's recipe, prepared arroz con pollo for his home economics class.

Each nonessential clause or phrase in the examples above can be omitted without changing the main idea expressed in the rest of the sentence.

EXAMPLES

Carla Harris will go to Vassar in the fall.

Antonio prepared arroz con pollo for his home economics class.

An essential (or restrictive) clause or participial phrase is not set off by commas because it contains information that is necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

Essential Clause	Mercury is the planet that is closest to the sun.
Essential Phrase	Any student wanting to participate in the readathon should sign up in the library by Friday.

Notice how the omission of the essential clause or phrase affects the main idea of the sentence.

EXAMPLES

Mercury is the planet.

Any student should sign up in the library by Friday.

Some clauses and participial phrases may be either essential or nonessential. The presence or absence of commas tells the reader how the clause or phrase relates to the main idea of the sentence.

Essential	Dave took his problem to the librarian who is an authority on children's literature. [The library has more than one librarian, but only one is an authority on children's literature.]
Nonessential	Dave took his problem to the librarian, who is an authority on children's literature. [The library has only one librarian.]

Commas: Introductory Elements

(a) Use a comma after *yes, no,* or any mild exclamation such as *well* or *why* at the beginning of a sentence.

EXAMPLES

Yes, you are welcome to join us.

Well, what do you think?

Why, the whole story sounds suspicious!

(b) Use a comma after an introductory participial phrase.

EXAMPLES

Proofreading my report, I saw that I had written *gorilla,* instead of *guerrilla, warfare.*

Almost hidden by the dense brush, the tiny, brown rabbit sat absolutely still.

NOTE: **Do not confuse a gerund phrase used as the subject of a sentence with an introductory participial phrase.**

Gerund Phrase Planting the Japanese quinces along the fence took several hours.
Participial Phrase Planting the Japanese quinces along the fence, I stepped on a mound of fire ants.

(c) Use a comma after two or more introductory prepositional phrases.

EXAMPLE

At the end of the block just beyond the new railroad station, my grandparents own and operate a small restaurant.

NOTE: **A single introductory prepositional phrase does not require a comma unless the phrase is parenthetical or unless the sentence is confusing or awkward without the comma.**

EXAMPLES

During spring break we're going camping in the mountains. [clear without comma]

By the way, you're late. [The comma is needed because the phrase is parenthetical.]

From Laura, Lee had borrowed a sleeping bag, a canteen, and a flashlight. [The comma is needed to avoid reading *Laura Lee.*]

(d) Use a comma after an introductory adverb clause.

EXAMPLES

While the orchestra tuned their instruments, the stagehands checked the curtain.

As soon as we finished eating, we cleared the table for a game of mah-jongg.

Commas: Interrupters

(a) Appositives and appositive phrases are usually set off by commas.

An appositive is a noun or a pronoun placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or explain it. An appositive phrase consists of an appositive and its modifiers.

EXAMPLES

An interview with Florence Cohen, the well-known landscape architect, will appear in the *Herald.*

Sipa, a game similar to volleyball, is a popular sport in the Philippines.

Sometimes an appositive is so closely related to the word or words preceding it that it should not be set off by commas. Such an appositive is called a restrictive appositive.

EXAMPLES

the landscape artist Fernando Amorsolo

the novel *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

(b) Words used in direct address are set off by commas.

EXAMPLES

Will you explain to the class, Lena, how you solved the last problem?

Dexter, please help your brother set the table.

You seem upset, my friend.

(c) Parenthetical expressions are set off by commas.

Parenthetical expressions are remarks that add incidental information or relate ideas to each other.

Commonly Used Parenthetical Expressions

after all	I believe	naturally
at any rate	incidentally	nevertheless
by the way	in fact	of course
consequently	in general	on the contrary
for example	in the first place	on the other hand
for instance	meanwhile	that is
however	moreover	therefore

EXAMPLES

The train will, I am sure, be on time.

On the contrary, exercise is relaxing.

Jameson was the first to solve the puzzle, naturally.

Some of these expressions are not always parenthetical. When an expression is not used parenthetically, it is not set off by commas.

EXAMPLE

My grandfather, by the way, created these colorful sand paintings. [parenthetical, meaning "incidentally"]

We could see by the way Melinda worked that she wanted to do her best. [not parenthetical, meaning "by the manner in which"]

NOTE: **A contrasting expression introduced by *not* is parenthetical and should be set off by commas.**

EXAMPLE

Frank Robinson, not Jackie Robinson, was the first African American to manage a major league baseball team.

Commas: Conventional Uses

(a) Use a comma to separate items in dates and addresses.

EXAMPLES

Hawaii achieved statehood on August 21, 1959, becoming the fiftieth state.
Write to me at 423 Twentieth Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84101, after the first of May.

Notice that a comma also separates the final item in a date (*1959*) and in an address (*84101*) from the words that follow it. Notice also that a comma does not separate the month from the day (*August 21*), the house number from the street name (*423 Twentieth Street*), or the state name from the ZIP code (*UT 84101*).

Do not use a comma when writing the day before the month.

EXAMPLE

The Hubble Space Telescope was launched on 27 April 1990.

Do not use a comma to separate the month from the day.

EXAMPLE

We began rehearsals on June 20.

Do not use a comma to separate the month from the year when no day is given.

EXAMPLE

A severe storm hit Luzon in October 1991.

Do not use a comma when a preposition appears between the items in a date or an address.

EXAMPLE

Joanna lived at 301 Green Street in San Diego during June of 1989.

(b) Use a comma after the salutation of a friendly letter and after the closing of any letter.

EXAMPLES

Dear Angela,
Sincerely yours,

(c) Use a comma after a name followed by an abbreviation such as *Jr., Sr.,* or *Ph.D.*

EXAMPLE

Hazel Sellers, M.D., will be the guest speaker. [Notice that within a sentence an abbreviation is followed by a comma as well.]

Semicolons

(a) Use a semicolon between independent clauses that are closely related in thought and are not joined by *and, but, for, nor, or, so,* or *yet.*

EXAMPLE

"No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

John Donne, from "Meditation 17"

Do not join independent clauses unless there is a close relationship between the main ideas of the clauses.

Nonstandard Madagascar is a small nation made up of several islands; for many years, scientists have studied this country because of its unusual wildlife.

Standard Madagascar is a small nation made up of several islands. For many years, scientists have studied this country because of its unusual wildlife.

(b) Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression.

A conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression indicates the relationship between the independent clauses that it joins.

EXAMPLES

The speech was long and repetitious; consequently, people in the audience began fidgeting in their seats and whispering among themselves.

Commonly Used Conjunctive Adverbs

accordingly	however	moreover
besides	indeed	nevertheless
consequently	instead	otherwise
furthermore	meanwhile	therefore

Commonly Used Transitional Expressions

as a result	for instance	on the contrary
for example	in fact	that is

NOTE: When a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression is used between independent clauses, it is preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

EXAMPLE

The leaders of the two nations saw no hope for a settlement; however, they were willing to meet again.

When used within a clause, the conjunctive adverb or transitional expression is set off by commas.

EXAMPLE

The leaders of the two nations saw no hope for a settlement; they were willing, however, to meet again.

(c) Use a semicolon (rather than a comma) before a coordinating conjunction to join

independent clauses that contain commas.

EXAMPLE

Stephen Foster wrote many songs, including "Oh, Susanna," "Camptown Races," and "Beautiful Dreamer"; but he is perhaps best remembered for "My Old Kentucky Home," which became the state song of Kentucky.

(d) Use a semicolon between items in a series if the items contain commas.

EXAMPLE

On our trip to South America, we visited Santiago, Chile; Bogota, Colombia; and Lima, Peru.

Colons

(a) Use a colon before a list of items, especially after expressions like *as follows* and *the following.*

EXAMPLES

Central America comprises seven countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

The volumes of poetry that form Edward Brathwaite's autobiographical trilogy are as follows: "Rights of Passage," "Masks," and "Islands."

NOTE: Do not use a colon before a list that serves as a direct object or an object of a preposition.

EXAMPLES

We collected blankets, canned goods, medical supplies, and clothing for the flood victims. [The list is the direct object of the verb *collected.*]

The concert included performances by Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and José Carreras. [The list is the object of the preposition *by.*]

(b) Use a colon before a long, formal statement or quotation.

EXAMPLE

The Gettysburg Address, delivered by President Lincoln during the American Civil War, begins with these words: "Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

(c) Use a colon between independent clauses when the second clause explains or restates the idea of the first.

EXAMPLE

"A cutting word is worse than a bowstring: A cut may heal, but the cut of the tongue does not."

African proverb

(d) Use a colon between the hour and the minute.

EXAMPLES

8:00 a.m.

9:30 in the evening

(e) Use a colon between a chapter and verse in referring to passages from the Bible.

EXAMPLES

Proverbs 3:3

Ecclesiastes 3:1--8

(f) Use a colon between a title and subtitle.

EXAMPLES

"Ghosts and Voices: Writing from Obsession" [article]

Billie Holiday: The Golden Years [recording]

(g) Use a colon after the salutation of a business letter.

EXAMPLES

Dear Ms. Ayala:

To Whom It May Concern:

NOTE: **Use a comma after the salutation of a friendly letter.**

EXAMPLE

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

Italics (Underlining)

(a) Use *italics* (underlining) for titles of books, plays, long poems, periodicals, newspapers, works of art, films, television series, long musical compositions, trains, ships, aircraft, and spacecraft.

Type Of Name	Examples	
Books	*Arctic Dreams*	*Wuthering Heights*
Plays	*The King and I*	*West Side Story*
Long Poems	*I Am Joaquín*	*The Song of Roland*
Periodicals	*National Geographic*	*Senior Scholastic*
Newspapers	*San Diego Tribune*	*Wall Street Journal*
Works of Art	*Three Dancers*	*The Thinker*
Films	*Out of Africa*	*Gone with the Wind*
TV Series	*World of Discovery*	*I Love Lucy*
Long Musical Compositions	*Appalachian Spring*	*Don Giovanni*
Trains, Ships, Spacecraft	*Orient Express*	*Queen Mary*
or Aircraft	*Enola Gay*	*Atlantis*
	Hindenburg	*Skylab 1*

NOTE: The article *the* before the title of a newspaper is neither italicized nor capitalized when written within a sentence.

EXAMPLE

I found some good ideas in several back issues of the *New York Times.*

(b) Use italics (underlining) for words, letters, and figures referred to as such and for foreign words not yet adopted into English.

EXAMPLES

The most common word in English is *the;* the letters used most frequently are *e* and *t* ; and the numbers most often confused are *7* and *9.*

The Latin phrase *ad astra per aspera* means "to the stars through difficulties."

Quotation Marks: Direct Quotations

Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation--a person's exact words.

EXAMPLES

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

"People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them," wrote author James Baldwin in *Notes of a Native Son.*

Do not use quotation marks to enclose an indirect quotation--a rewording of a direct quotation.

Direct Quotation Natalie said, "My favorite singer is Whitney Houston."
Indirect Quotation Natalie said that her favorite singer is Whitney Houston.

(a) A direct quotation begins with a capital letter.

EXAMPLE

In *Up from Slavery,* Booker T. Washington said, "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

When the quotation is only a part of a sentence, do not begin the quotation with a capital letter.

EXAMPLE

A film critic has called the movie "a futile attempt by the director to trade on his reputation as a creator of blockbusters."

(b) When an expression identifying the speaker interrupts a quoted sentence, the second part of the quotation begins with a small letter.

EXAMPLE

"When we do the best that we can," explained Helen Keller, "we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another." [Notice that each part of a divided quotation is enclosed in quotation marks.]

When the second part of a divided quotation is another sentence, it begins with a capital letter.

EXAMPLE

"Please don't open the door!" he shouted. "We're developing film."

(c) A direct quotation is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma, a question mark, or an exclamation point, but not by a period.

EXAMPLES

"For tomorrow, please read the article about the Sherpas of Nepal," requested Ms. Estevan.

"Who is the president of the Philippines?" asked Nathan.

"The Wildcats have upset the Rockets!" exclaimed the sportscaster.

NOTE: If the quotation is only a word or a phrase, do not set the quotation off by commas.

EXAMPLE

In his speech, Enrique said that "one for all and all for one" is the key to a successful club.

(d) When used with quotation marks, the other marks of punctuation are placed according to the following rules:

Commas and periods are always placed inside the closing quotation marks.

EXAMPLE

"Generosity," said Nathaniel Hawthorne, "is the flower of justice."

Semicolons and colons are always placed outside the closing quotation marks.

EXAMPLES

"Eva," my grandmother said, "you should keep up with your chores"; then she reminded me that it was my turn to vacuum.

Gail Sloan described the following as "deserted-island reading": An *Encyclopedia of World History,* the complete works of Shakespeare, and *Robinson Crusoe.*

Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the closing quotation marks if a quotation is a question or an exclamation. Otherwise, they are placed outside.

EXAMPLES

The teacher asked me, "Where did you find this information about José Rizal?"

Someone behind me shouted, "Watch out!"

Did Franklin Roosevelt say, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself"?

How proud and happy Colleen was when her supervisor told her, "You deserve a raise"!

NOTE: In a sentence that ends with a quotation, only one end mark is necessary.

Incorrect Have you ever asked yourself, "Where will I be ten years from now?"?
Correct Have you ever asked yourself, "Where will I be ten years from now?"

(e) When writing dialogue, begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes, and enclose each speaker's words in quotation marks.

EXAMPLE

"Don't stand chattering to yourself like that," Humpty Dumpty said, looking at her for the first time, "but tell me your name and business."

"My name is Alice, but--"

"It's a stupid name enough!" Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. "What does it mean?"

"Must a name mean something?" Alice asked doubtfully.

"Of course it must," Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: "my name means the shape I am--and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost."

Lewis Carroll, from *Through the Looking-Glass*

(f) When quoting a passage that consists of more than one paragraph, place quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of only the last paragraph in the passage.

EXAMPLE

"Oh! no mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

"I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly, that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through langour and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!"

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, from *Frankenstein*

NOTE: A long passage quoted from a printed source is often set off from the rest of the text. The entire passage may be indented or set in smaller type. The passage is sometimes single-spaced instead of double-spaced. (Modern Language Association [MLA] guidelines, however, call for double-spacing.) When a quotation is set off in any of these ways, no quotation marks are necessary.

(g) Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

EXAMPLES

Mrs. Winters said, "Cristina, please tell us what you think Alexander Pope meant when he said, 'To err is human, to forgive divine.' " [Notice that the period is placed inside the single quotation mark.]

Mrs. Winters asked, "Do you think the moral of the story could be 'To err is human, to forgive divine'?" [The question mark is placed between the double quotation marks and the single quotation mark because only Mrs. Winters' words, not Pope's, are a question.]

Quotation Marks: Titles

Use quotation marks to enclose titles of short works, such as short stories, short poems, essays, articles, songs, episodes of television series, and chapters and other parts of books.

Type Of Title	Examples
Short Stories	"Raymond's Run"
	"Chee's Daughter"
Poems	"My Mother Pieced Quilts"
	"A Black Man Talks of Reaping"
Essays	"A Child's Christmas in Wales"
	"Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses"
Articles	"How to Choose a Career"
	"Water: Not as Cheap as You Think"
Songs	"We Are the World"
	"The Star-Spangled Banner"
TV Episodes	"The Trouble with Tribbles"
	"Secret of the Dead Sea Scrolls"
Chapters	"The War in the Persian Gulf"
	"Biology: The Study of Life"

Quotation Marks: Other Uses

Use quotation marks to enclose slang words, invented words, technical terms, dictionary definitions of words, and any expressions that are unusual in standard English.

EXAMPLES

In the drama club's latest production, Dylan plays the role of Lyndon, a "nerd."

The running of the bulls through the streets (one might say "bullevards") of Pamplona, Spain, is an annual event.

What do you mean by "looping" the computer instructions?

The names Kansas and Arkansas are derived from the Sioux word for "downstream people."

Chapter 11

Ellipsis Points: Omissions from Quoted Material

Use ellipsis points (. . .) to mark omissions from quoted material.

ORIGINAL "A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him, I may think aloud. I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal, that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men never put off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank, *that* being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform unto. Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, from *Friendship*

(a) If the quoted material that comes before the omission is not a complete sentence, use three ellipsis points with a space before the first point.

EXAMPLE

In his essay, Emerson says, "Sincerity is the luxury allowed, . . . only to the highest rank, . . . as having none above it to court or conform unto."

(b) If the quoted material that comes before the omission is a complete sentence, keep the end mark and add the ellipsis points.

EXAMPLE

Emerson states that he feels a friend is trustworthy: "Before him, I may think aloud. . . . I . . . may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another."

(c) If one or more than one sentence is omitted, the ellipsis points follow the end mark that precedes the omission.

EXAMPLE

When speaking with a true friend, Emerson writes, "I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal, . . . [that I] may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another."

Notice in the last example that the words *that I* are included to identify the speaker. The words are enclosed in brackets to show that they have been inserted into the quotation and are not the exact words of the speaker.

(d) To show that a full line or more of poetry has been omitted, use an entire line of spaced periods.

Original Verse

"Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late."

Verse With Omissions

"Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
. . . . . .
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late."

Phillis Wheatley, "To His Excellency General Washington"

Notice that the line of periods is as long as the line of poetry above it.

Chapter 11

Ellipsis Points: Pauses in Written Passages

To indicate a pause in a written passage, use three ellipsis points with a space before the first point.

EXAMPLE

"Well, . . . I don't know what to say," Sarah answered.

Chapter 11

Apostrophes: Possessive Case

The possessive case of a noun or a pronoun shows ownership or relationship.

Ownership	**Relationship**
Alice Walker's poetry	Crowfoot's family
the student's suggestions	my grandparents
your opinion	five dollars' worth

(a) To form the possessive of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and an *s.*

EXAMPLES

the senator's comments
Charles's grades
tennis racquet's size
player's turn

NOTE: When forming the possessive of a singular noun ending in an *s* sound, add only an apostrophe if the noun has two or more syllables and if the addition of *s* will make the noun awkward to pronounce. Otherwise, add *s.*

EXAMPLES

the seamstress' work
for goodness' sake
Achilles' battles
Mr. Martinez' article

(b) To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in *s,* add only the apostrophe.

EXAMPLES

the girls' team
the Millses' back yard
the winners' trophy
the governors' conference

The few plural nouns that do not end in *s* form the possessive by adding an apostrophe and an *s.*

EXAMPLES

women's tournament
children's playground

NOTE: Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of a noun.

Incorrect Two of the novel's that Jean Rhys wrote are Wide Sargasso Sea and Voyage in the Dark.

Correct Two of the novels that Jean Rhys wrote are Wide Sargasso Sea and Voyage in the Dark.

(c) Do not use an apostrophe with possessive personal pronouns--*my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs*--or with the possessive pronoun *whose.*

Incorrect We thought the top score was her's.
Correct We thought the top score was hers.

Incorrect I have witnessed democracy at it's best.
Correct I have witnessed democracy at its best.

Incorrect Who's notebook is this?
Correct Whose notebook is this?

(d) To form the possessive of an indefinite pronoun, add an apostrophe and an *s.*

EXAMPLES

Everyone's vote counts equally.

She consented to everybody's request for a class meeting.

NOTE: In such forms as *anyone else* and *somebody else,* the correct possessives are *anyone else's* and *somebody else's.*

(e) Form the possessive of only the last word in a hyphenated word, in the name of an organization or a business firm, or in a word group showing joint possession.

EXAMPLES

father-in-law's hobby

the Economic and Social Council's members

Lewis and Clark's expedition

When a possessive pronoun is part of a word group showing joint possession, each noun in the word group is also possessive.

EXAMPLE

Lusita's, Joshua's, and my report

(f) Form the possessive of each noun in a word group showing individual possession of similar items.

EXAMPLE

Maria Bethania's and Aster Aweke's albums

(g) Use an apostrophe in possessive forms of words that indicate time, such as *minute, hour, day, week, month,* and *year,* and possessives indicating an amount in cents or dollars.

EXAMPLES

a minute's work

five minutes' work

a day's rest

three days' rest

one cent's worth

five cents' worth

Chapter 11

Apostrophes: Contractions

A contraction is a shortened form of a word, word group, or number in which an apostrophe takes the place of the letters, numbers, or words that are omitted.

EXAMPLES

I am..... I'm	they had..... they'd
he has..... he's	where is..... where's
let us..... let's	we are..... we're
of the clock..... o'clock	we have..... we've
1950s..... '50s	you will..... you'll

The word *not* can be shortened to *-n't* and added to a verb, usually without any change in the spelling of the verb.

EXAMPLES

is not..... isn't	has not..... hasn't
does not..... doesn't	should not.... shouldn't
do not..... don't	were not..... weren't

EXCEPTIONS

will not..... won't	cannot..... can't

Chapter 11

Apostrophes: Plurals

Use an apostrophe and an *s* to form the plurals of all lowercase letters, some uppercase letters, and some words referred to as words.

EXAMPLES

Hawaii ends with two *i* 's. [Without the apostrophe, the plural of *i* would spell *is.*]

Not many names begin with *U*'s, but the names of my favorite bands--*U2* and *UB/40*--do. [Without the apostrophe, the plural of *U* would spell *Us.*]

Jeremy's *No want to*'*s* are just a sign that he's a normal two-year-old.

You may add only an *s* to form the plurals of such items--except lowercase letters--if the plural forms cannot be misread.

EXAMPLE

Most of his grades this term are Bs.

Be sure to use apostrophes consistently.

EXAMPLE

The printed *T*'s look like *I*'s. [Without the apostrophe, the plural of *I* would spell *Is.* The apostrophe in the plural of *T* is included for consistency.]

NOTE: To form the plurals of abbreviations that end with a period, add *'s.*

EXAMPLES

Ph.D.'s M.A.'s

To form the plurals of abbreviations not followed by periods, add either *'s* or *s.*

EXAMPLES

VCR's *or* VCRs CD's *or* CDs

Hyphens

(a) Use a hyphen to divide a word at the end of a line.

When dividing a word at the end of a line, remember the following rules:

Do not divide a one-syllable word.

Incorrect Alicia chose to write her report about the pli-
ght of the homeless.

Correct Alicia chose to write her report about the
plight of the homeless.

Divide a word only between syllables.

Incorrect Isn't Ethan running for student council presid-
ent this year?

Correct Isn't Ethan running for student council presi-
dent this year?

Divide an already hyphenated word at the hyphen.

Incorrect Hirohito was the emperor of Japan for six-
ty-three years.

Correct Hirohito was the emperor of Japan for sixty-
three years.

Do not divide a word so that one letter stands alone.

Incorrect Proofreading my report, I saw that I had o-
mitted an important quotation.

Correct Proofreading my report, I saw that I had omitted
an important quotation.

(b) Use a hyphen with compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and with fractions used as modifiers.

EXAMPLES

forty-two applicants

a two-thirds majority [*Two-thirds* is an adjective modifying *majority.*]

about three-fourths empty [*Three-fourths* is an adverb modifying *empty.*]

two thirds of the voters [*Two thirds* is not an adjective. *Thirds* is a noun modified by the adjective *two.*]

(c) Hyphenate a compound adjective when it precedes the word it modifies.

EXAMPLES

well-liked author

an author who is well liked

world-renowned composer

a composer who is world renowned

NOTE: Some compound adjectives are always hyphenated.

EXAMPLE

a well-balanced meal
a meal that is well-balanced

If you are unsure about whether a compound adjective is hyphenated, look up the word in a dictionary. Do not use a hyphen if one of the modifiers is an adverb ending in *-ly.*

EXAMPLE

a highly polished surface

(d) Use a hyphen with the prefixes *ex-, self-,* and *all-,* with the suffix *-elect,* and with all prefixes before a proper noun or proper adjective.

EXAMPLES

ex-mayor	non-European
self-control	pro-Canadian
all-star	anti-Fascist
president-elect	Pan-American

(e) Use a hyphen to prevent confusion or awkwardness.

EXAMPLES

re-collect [prevents confusion with *recollect*]
anti-icer [avoids the awkwardness of *antiicer*]

Dashes

(a) Use a dash to indicate an abrupt break in thought.

EXAMPLES

The director of the film--I can't recall his name--said that there would be a sequel.

The truth is--and you probably already know this--we can't finish the project on time.

(b) Use a dash to mean "namely," "in other words," or "that is" before an explanation.

EXAMPLES

It was a close call--the sudden gust of wind pushed the helicopter to within inches of the power line.

The early Native American civilizations--the Mayan, the Incan, and the Aztec--depended mainly on farming for their livelihood.

Parentheses

Use parentheses to enclose informative or explanatory material of minor importance.

EXAMPLES

Former Representative Barbara Jordan (Texas) was on that committee.

The length of the Mekong River is 4,186 kilometers (about 2,600 miles).

(a) A parenthetical sentence that falls within another sentence

- should not begin with a capital letter unless the sentence begins with a word that should always be capitalized
- should not end with a period but may end with a question mark or an exclamation point

EXAMPLES

The largest island of the Solomon Islands (see the map on page 453) is Guadalcanal.

I hope I persuaded Alex (is he a senior?) to help us.

(b) A parenthetical sentence that stands by itself

- should begin with a capital letter
- should end with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point

EXAMPLES

The largest island of the Solomon Islands is Guadalcanal. (See the map on page 453.)

Alex asked me if he could help us. (What do you think I said?)

NOTE: When parenthetical material falls within a sentence, punctuation never comes before the opening parenthesis but may follow the closing parenthesis.

Incorrect According to this article about Grandma Moses, (1860-1961) she began to paint in her seventies.

Correct According to this article about Grandma Moses (1860-1961), she began to paint in her seventies.

Brackets

Use brackets to enclose an explanation within quoted or parenthetical material.

EXAMPLES

Ms. Grayson was quoted as saying in her acceptance speech: "I am honored by this [the award], and I would like to share the recognition with those who made my work possible."

By a vote of 5 to 4, the Supreme Court overturned the lower court's ruling. (See page 149 [Diagram A] for a chronology of the case.)

Chapter 11

Chapter 12 Parenthetical Documentation

Print Source with One Author

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from print source by one author, write in parentheses the author's last name and then the page number(s).

EXAMPLE

(Chen 83)

Chapter12

Print Sources by Authors with the Same Last Name

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from print sources by authors with the same last name, write in parentheses the first and last names of each author and then the page number(s).

EXAMPLES

(Mary Sharer 21)
(John Sharer 102)

Print Source with More Than One Author

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from a print source by more than one author, write in parentheses the last name of each author and the the page number(s).

EXAMPLE

(Scheirer and Roberts 212)

Chapter12

Print Source with No Author Given

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from a print source that does not include the author's name, write in parentheses the title, or a shortened form of it, and then the page number(s).

EXAMPLE

("New Information" 34)

Chapter12

One-Page Print Source

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from a one-page print source, write in parentheses the author's name, or the title if no author's name is given.

EXAMPLES

(Chavez) *or* ("New Information")

Chapter12

Nonprint Source

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from a nonprint source, write in parentheses the title or a shortened form of it.

EXAMPLE

(*The Ancient New World*)

Chapter12

More Than One Print Source by the Same Author

At the end of the sentence in which you've used words or ideas from more than one print source by the same author, write in parentheses the author's last name, the title or a shortened form of it, and then the page number(s).

EXAMPLES

(Nissen, *Olmec Legacy* 21)
(Nissen, "New Discoveries" 45)

Chapter12

Author's Name Given in the Text

At the end of the sentence in which you've used the words or ideas of an author whose name you've included in the text, write in parentheses the page number only.

EXAMPLE

(76)

Chapter12

Chapter 13 Source Cards

Form

Ways to List Sources

Form (Source Cards)

Source cards are index cards or half-sheets of notebook paper. Write each source on a separate card and give it a source number. Write the source number in the upper right corner of the card. If you have four sources, for example, just number them 1, 2, 3, 4.

Source cards save you time when you take notes, and you'll use information on them at the end of your report.

Chapter 13

Ways to List Sources

There are several ways to list sources. The following way is recommended by the Modern Language Association (MLA). You should use whatever form your teacher recommends.

No matter what form you use, follow the capitalization, punctuation, and order of information exactly. (Notice the author's last name is first, followed by a comma and his or her first name.)

1. Books: author, title, city of publication, publisher, and copyright year.
2. Magazines and Newspapers: author, title of article, name of magazine or newspaper, date, and page.
3. Encyclopedia Articles: author, title of article, name of encyclopedia, year and edition (ed.). If there is no author, begin with the title.
4. Interviews: expert's name, the words *Personal interview* or *Telephone interview,* and date.
5. Films and Videotapes: director's or producer's name, title of film or tape, studio name, year of release.

Chapter 14 Note Cards

Taking Notes

Form

Taking Notes

How do you decide what to use? Let your early plan and questions about your topic guide you. Scan through your sources for information that relates to your headings and your questions.

Don't be afraid to add new, interesting information you find, but add headings to your early plan that reflect these new ideas.

Chapter 14

Form (Note Cards)

These tips can help you take efficient notes:

1. Use a separate 4" x 6" note card or sheet of paper for each source and for each note.
2. Use abbreviations and short phrases. You can also make lists of ideas. You don't need to write complete sentences.
3. Use your own words. If you copy someone's exact words, put quotation marks around the words. (Not doing so is called *plagiarism.* It is a dishonest practice.)
4. Label each card by writing at the top a key word or phrase that tells what the card is about. These words and phrases can come from your early plan.
5. Put the source number at the top of the card, also.
6. At the bottom of each card, write the page number where you found the information.
7. Take notes from each of your sources.

Adjectives

Agreement

in Number

in Number and Gender

AGREEMENT OF PRONOUN AND ANTECEDENT (Chapter 4)

AGREEMENT OF SUBJECT AND VERB (Chapter 3)

Antecedents

Antecedents: Joined by *and*

Antecedents: Joined by *or* or *nor*

Apostrophes

Apostrophes: Contractions

Apostrophes: Plurals

Apostrophes: Possessive Case

Authors

Commas

Comparison

Ellipsis Points

Forming Plurals

Modifiers

Names

Names of Nationalities, Races, Peoples
Names of Organizations (capitalizing)
Names of Particular Events and Periods
Names of Particular Things and Places
Names of Persons
Names of Religions
Names of Languages and Specific Courses

Nouns

Print Sources

Pronouns

AGREEMENT OF PRONOUN AND ANTECEDENT (Chapter 4)
CASE FORMS OF PRONOUNS (Chapter 5)
Indefinite Pronouns (Agreement Subject,Verb)
Indefinite Pronouns (Agreement with Antecedent)
Personal Pronouns as Appositives
Personal Pronouns Preceding Gerunds
Personal Pronouns as Objects of Verbs, Objects of Prepositions
Personal Pronouns as Subjects, Predicate Nominatives
Pronouns Ending in *-self* or *-selves*
Pronoun *I* and Interjection *O*
Proper Nouns and Proper Adjectives

Quotation Marks

Suffixes

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Are words showing family relationships capitalized correctly?

In a firsthand biography, you often use words that show family relationships, such as "uncle," "mother," "grandma". Capitalize the word when it is used before or in place of someone's name.

EXAMPLES:

My favorite relative is **Uncle** Douglas.
May I have a piece of fruit, **Mother**?

Do not capitalize the word when a possessive, such as "my," "her," or "John's," comes before it.

EXAMPLES:

I admire my **cousin** Maria.
Her **grandmother** takes art classes.

More information about capitalization

Are adjectives in a series punctuated correctly?

When you describe people in a firsthand biography, you may use two or more adjectives before a noun. Use a comma to separate these adjectives.

EXAMPLES:

Jupiter is a large, strange woman who always wears blue.
Zina Garrison played a powerful**,** brilliant game.

Sometimes, the last adjective is closely related to the noun that follows. In this case, do not use a comma.

EXAMPLES:

I have a green tree frog.
Cold orange juice is especially good.

More information about commas

Are transition words such as first, then, and finally used correctly?

Use transition words in cause and effect writing to show order of ideas. These words can show **chronological**, or time, order and **order of importance**. Place a comma after the word if it appears first in the sentence.

EXAMPLES:

First, our star forward fouled out.
Finally, litter makes our school look messy.

More about transition words using

Commas

Colons

Semicolons

Are words such as because, when, since, and before used correctly to join sentences?

Words such as because, when, since, before are often used to join sentences and show a **cause-and-effect relationship**. If a group of words beginning with because, when, since, or before begins a sentence, place a comma after the group of words.

EXAMPLES:

Because our star forward fouled out, she had to be replaced.
When litter piles up, our school looks messy.

More on commas and introductory elements

See also Semicolons

Quotation marks and the story

Are quotation marks placed before and after words taken from the story? Is the title of the story enclosed in quotation marks?

- Use quotation marks to enclose any words taken from the story. A comma or a period goes inside the closing quotation marks.

EXAMPLE:

The suspense builds when you read that the boar "came through the trees so fast that she had no time to scream or run."

- Use single quotation marks to enclose dialogue within a quotation.

EXAMPLE:

I wanted to know why Jenny would "whisper, 'Boar out there.'"

- Use quotation marks to enclose the title of a short story.

EXAMPLE:

"The Tell-Tale Heart" is one of the creepiest stories Poe wrote.

More about Quotation Marks for

Direct Quotations

Titles

Are words such as because, since, when, and if used correctly to join sentences?

Words such as "because," "since," "when," and "if" are often used to join sentences that present reasons or retell events. If a group of words beginning with "because," "since," "when," or "if" begins a sentence, place a comma after the group of words.

Example:

Because all the characters are smart, popular, and good-looking, it's hard to believe their troubles.

If she loses the race, she could be Raymond's coach.

More on commas and introductory elements

See also Semicolons

Is dialogue punctuated correctly?

Follow two rules about punctuating dialogue.

- Put quotation marks around a person's exact words or thoughts.

EXAMPLE

"Watch the dolphin," John said. "It's about to jump."

- Always put commas and periods inside the quotation marks. Place a question mark or exclamation point inside the closing quotation marks when the quotation itself is a question or exclamation.

EXAMPLE

"Watch the dolphin leap!"

More on quotation marks and dialogue

Are the pronouns I and me used correctly?

When you write about yourself, use first person. Refer to yourself as I and me.

USE I WHEN THE PRONOUN IS A SUBJECT.

I became lost when I was six years old.

USE ME WHEN THE PRONOUN IS AN OBJECT.

The world was a frightening place to me.

More on personal pronouns

Are adjectives ending with -ing beside the nouns they modify?

Make sure adjectives that end with -ing are close to the word they describe.

INCORRECT

The dog caught the stick running. (The dog should be running, not the stick.)

CORRECT

The running dog caught the stick.

More on

Present participles

Placement of modifiers

Are adjectives in a series separated with commas?

Are you using more than one adjective in a row to describe your subject? Place commas to separate two or more adjectives coming before a noun. You do not need a comma between the last adjective in the series and the noun it modifies.

Incorrect	The small bumpy gray toad leapt into the bushes.
Incorrect	The small, bumpy, gray, toad leapt into the bushes.
Correct	The small**,** bumpy**,** gray toad leapt into the bushes.

More on

Commas and items in a series

Is every sentence a complete sentence, not a fragment?

A sentence fragment is a part of a sentence that is written as if it were a complete sentence. Look for places where you have capitalized how, which, who, because, or since. If these words are not the first words in questions, you may have written a fragment.

EXAMPLES:

Fragment	Our gymnasts have lost more events than they have won. **Because they don't have the proper equipment.**
Sentence	Our gymnasts have lost more events than they have won because they don't have the proper equipment.

More on complete sentences

Does every sentence begin with a capital letter and end with the correct punctuation mark?

Capitalize the first word in every sentence. End a sentence with a period, question mark, or exclamation point.

One or two exclamation marks may be helpful to accent urgent situations. Too many exclamation marks make the writer appear to be hysterical.

More on

Capitalizing first words

Punctuation

Common Usage Problems (Index)

like, as

like, as if

might of, must of

nor, or

nowheres

of

off, off of

or, nor

ought

ought to of

reason . . . because

she

should of

some, somewhat

somewheres

sort(s)

sort of

take

than, then

that

them

they

this here, that there

this, that, these, those

type(s)

ways

when, where

where

where . . . at

who, which, that

would of

Are numbers written correctly?

Facts in a report often include numbers. Follow these rules when spelling out numbers.

- Spell out a number that begins a sentence

EXAMPLE:

Two thousand people crowded into the stadium.

- Spell out numbers that can be written as one or two words. Use numerals for other numbers.

EXAMPLE:

There are **thirty-two** students in my homeroom and **647** students in my school.

- Use numerals for dates that include the name of the month. Always use numerals for years.

EXAMPLE:

My birthday is **June 6, 1983.**

More on writing numbers

Are third-person pronouns used correctly?

Reports are often written in the third-person. Writers refer to people as he, she, him, her, they, them.

More on forms of personal pronouns

Is the title of your story written correctly?

Follow these rules to write the title of your story.

- Capitalize the first and last words of your story.
- Capitalize all other important words in the title.
- Do not underline or put quotation marks around your title.

EXAMPLES:

The Storm

First Snow of Winter

Adventures of a Visitor from Outer Space

More on Titles

Is dialogue punctuated correctly?

Follow these rules to punctuate dialogue.

- Enclose a character's exact words or thoughts in quotation marks.
- Always put commas and periods inside the quotation marks. Place a question mark or exclamation point inside the closing quotation marks when the quotation itself is a question or exclamation.

EXAMPLES:

"Let's go," she said.

"Hi! What's your name?" John asked shyly.

Tina yelled, "Stop!"

More on quotation marks and dialogue

Are nouns used as titles to show family relationships capitalized correctly?

Autobiographical incident essays name specific people, whose names often have titles showing family relationships. Capitalize a title showing a family relationship when the title is used with a person's name, but not when a possessive precedes the name. When a title is used alone, in direct address, capitalize the title.

EXAMPLES:

In our family, the first person to graduate from college was Aunt Margaret.
In our family, the first person to graduate from college was my aunt Margaret.
Hello, Grandma.

More information about capitalization

Are participial phrases correctly placed?

In an autobiographical incident essay, participial phrases are often used to describe people, places, and actions. Place the phrase as close as possible to the word it modifies.

EXAMPLES:

Correct: Avoiding detection, he and my uncle drove off into the night.
Misplaced modifier: He and my uncle drove off into the night avoiding detection.

More on punctuating participial phrases

Check for comma splices.

Often writers forget that words like "however," "consequently," and "therefore" may introduce a new sentence. In that case, the new sentence should be separated from the previous sentence by a semicolon or a period.

More on Punctuation

Review your paper to be certain that you have used transition words that make relationships clear to your readers.

You may need to use words that signal the time of events ("first," "second," "before," "after," and so on) or words that signal relationships between events ("consequently," "therefore," "as a result," and so on).

More on commas and introductory elements

See also Semicolons

Does every pronoun agree with its antecedent in number and gender?

Remember words such as "anyone," " everyone," "someone," "anybody," "everybody," and "somebody" are singular; therefore, pronouns that refer to them should also be singular. To avoid sexist language, you may use "his or her" to refer to those words.

More on pronoun / antecedent agreement

Are transition words and phrases such as consequently, as a result, and in addition to used correctly?

Use transition words in an evaluation paper to show the relationship between ideas. Transition words can also show chronological order, and order of importance. Place a comma after a transition word if it appears first in the sentence.

EXAMPLES:

Consequently, our food arrived at the table too cold to eat.
Finally, the waiter noticed that we had finished our meal.

More on commas and introductory elements

See also Semicolons

Are words such as because, when, since, and before used correctly to join clauses?

Words such as "because," "when," "since," and "before" are often used to join clauses and to show the relationship between the standard criteria and the examples specific to the subject of the paper. If a group of words beginning with "because," "when," "since," or "before" begins a sentence, place a comma after the group of words.

EXAMPLES:

Because we expected a star of his caliber to give a fine performance, we were extremely disappointed with this movie.

When one dines at a four-star restaurant, one expects exceptional service.

More on commas and introductory elements

See also Semicolons

Are quotations punctuated and capitalized correctly?

Quotations may be used to develop the controlling idea of a report. You may quote a whole sentence, introducing it in your own words. Place a comma after your words and capitalize the first word of the quotation.

EXAMPLE

According to sleep researcher John Moriarity, "As much as we have learned about dreaming, why it really happens remains a mystery."

You may also place a directly quoted phrase or part of a phrase into your own sentence and enclose it in quotation marks. Do not capitalize the first word of the quotation unless it is a proper noun or adjective.

EXAMPLE

Sleep researcher John Moriarity says that "as much as we have learned about dreaming, why it really happens remains a mystery."

More on quotation marks and dialogue

Are titles written correctly?

Reports often include titles of literary and artistic works. Follow these rules when writing titles.

- Capitalize the first and last words and other important words in the title.
- Underline titles of books, plays, historical documents, movies, compact discs and tapes, and radio and TV programs.
- Use quotation marks around titles of short stories, specific episodes of radio and TV programs, and individual songs.

More on Titles

Is the title of the work of literature used correctly?

Underline or italicize titles of novels, plays, and collections of short stories and poems. Use quotation marks around titles of individual short stories and poems. Capitalize the first word and all other important words in a title.

EXAMPLES:

Animal Farm
I Never Sang for My Father
"The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky"
"The Road Not Taken"

More on Titles

Are quotations from the text used correctly?

Follow these rules when incorporating exact quotations from the text.

- Enclose the quotation in quotation marks.
- Place a comma after words introducing the quote, and capitalize the first word of the quotation.
- If you incorporate the quotation into your own sentence, capitalize the first word only if it would otherwise be capitalized.

EXAMPLES:

In his story "The Gift of the Magi," O. Henry writes, "Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the wisest."

In his story "The Gift of the Magi," O. Henry writes that "they are the wisest" of all gift givers.

- Use ellipsis points (. . .) to show that part of a quotation is omitted.

EXAMPLE:

The narrator in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" observes that "at length . . . there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison."

- Separate lines of poetry with a slash.

EXAMPLE:

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow describes the sound of the sea as "A voice out of the silence of the deep, / A sound mysteriously multiplied."

More on quotation marks and dialogue

Use the correct form of frequently confused words.

Remember that the Spell Checker may not be able to distinguish between homonyms because each homonym is a correctly spelled word in its own context. Read each sentence carefully to see if it contains a homonym. Learn the correct spelling and meaning of homonyms that are frequently confused.

EXAMPLES:

Some stars have their own planets.
We went there early.
They're celebrating a birthday.

More on common usage problems

Using commas to separate items in a series.

Use commas to separate items within a series, not before the first item or after the final item in a series. If two or more adjectives precede a noun, use commas to separate them; however, do not use a comma before the final adjective in a series of adjectives if the adjective may be considered part of the noun.

EXAMPLES:

As citizens in a democracy, we need to read newspapers, listen to candidates, research the issues, and exercise our right to vote at every opportunity.

Monday was a sunny, breezy spring day.

Use the "and" test to determine whether an adjective and a noun form a unit.

THE "AND" TEST:

sunny and breezy and spring day

["And spring" sounds awkward; do not use a comma between breezy and spring.]

Here's another test: Try changing the order of the adjectives. If the new order makes sense, use a comma.

CHANGING-THE-ORDER TEST:

[Sunny, breezy spring day makes sense; sunny, spring, breezy day does not.]

[Spring day forms a unit. Do not use a comma between breezy and spring.]

More on Commas and items in a series

Using first-person pronouns correctly.

A reflective essay usually has a relaxed, informal tone and is written in the first person. The form of the pronoun changes according to the way it is used in the sentence.

- Use "I" and "we" if the pronoun is the subject or the predicate nominative of the sentence. Use "my" or "our" to show ownership or possession.

  EXAMPLES:

  I was deeply moved by **my** experience working in the animal shelter.

  It was **we** who were responsible for the welfare of the stray animals.

- Use "me" or "us" if the pronoun is an object.

  EXAMPLES:

  A lot was demanded of **me** at the shelter.

  The director gave **us** all the help she could.

More on forms of personal pronouns

Punctuate dialogue correctly.

In a reflective essay, writers often use dialogue to indicate speech or to show thoughts. Enclose the speaker's exact words in quotation marks, and begin a new paragraph if the speaker changes. Use commas to set off dialogue tags. If a dialogue tag interrupts a sentence, the first word after the tag usually is not capitalized.

EXAMPLES:

"You've been terrific volunteers," the director commented.

"Isn't it true," I wondered to myself, "that we show what kind of society we are by the way we care for our animals?"

More on quotation marks and dialogue