Grammar in a Nutshell

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This is a grammar outline for use by triOS students in various programs in order to improve their grammar skills.

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Contents

[Welcome to Grammar! 4](#_Toc313360496)

[Parts of Speech 4](#_Toc313360497)

[Noun 4](#_Toc313360498)

[Proper nouns and common nouns. 4](#_Toc313360499)

[Pronoun 4](#_Toc313360500)

[Count vs. Non-Count Nouns 4](#_Toc313360501)

[Adjective 4](#_Toc313360502)

[Article 5](#_Toc313360503)

[Verb 5](#_Toc313360504)

[Adverb 5](#_Toc313360505)

[Preposition 6](#_Toc313360506)

[Conjunctions 6](#_Toc313360507)

[Sentence Construction (Syntax) 8](#_Toc313360508)

[Simple Sentence 8](#_Toc313360509)

[The Compound Sentence 9](#_Toc313360510)

[The Complex Sentence 9](#_Toc313360511)

[The Compound-Complex Sentence 9](#_Toc313360512)

[Fragment Sentences 9](#_Toc313360513)

[Common Problem Words 10](#_Toc313360514)

[Punctuation 11](#_Toc313360515)

[Comma 11](#_Toc313360516)

[Semicolon 11](#_Toc313360517)

[Colons 11](#_Toc313360518)

[Dashes 11](#_Toc313360519)

[Quotation Marks 12](#_Toc313360520)

[Apostrophes 12](#_Toc313360521)

[Contractions 13](#_Toc313360522)

[Possession 13](#_Toc313360523)

[Replacing a Noun 13](#_Toc313360524)

[Plural Possession 13](#_Toc313360525)

[Plural Names 13](#_Toc313360526)

[Singular Compound Noun 13](#_Toc313360527)

[Plural Compound Noun 13](#_Toc313360528)

[Multiple Possessions 13](#_Toc313360529)

[Possessive Pronouns 13](#_Toc313360530)

[It Is/It Has 13](#_Toc313360531)

[Abbreviations 13](#_Toc313360532)

[Numbers 14](#_Toc313360533)

[Exclamation Points 14](#_Toc313360534)

[Ellipsis Marks 14](#_Toc313360535)

[Periods 14](#_Toc313360536)

[Question Marks 14](#_Toc313360537)

[Spacing with Punctuation 14](#_Toc313360538)

[Dashes 15](#_Toc313360539)

[En Dash 15](#_Toc313360540)

[Em Dash 15](#_Toc313360541)

[Parentheses 15](#_Toc313360542)

[Plurals 16](#_Toc313360543)

[Regular Plurals 16](#_Toc313360544)

[Irregular Plurals 16](#_Toc313360545)

[All Kinds 16](#_Toc313360546)

[Unchanging 16](#_Toc313360547)

[Odds and Ends 16](#_Toc313360548)

[Possessives 17](#_Toc313360549)

[Singular 17](#_Toc313360550)

[Proper Names 17](#_Toc313360551)

[Plural 17](#_Toc313360552)

[Possessive Pronouns 17](#_Toc313360553)

[It’s vs Its 17](#_Toc313360554)

[Who, Whom, Whoever, Whomever 17](#_Toc313360555)

[Who vs. That vs. Which 18](#_Toc313360556)

[For People and Things 18](#_Toc313360557)

[Clauses 18](#_Toc313360558)

[Writing Numbers 18](#_Toc313360559)

[Common Style Mistakes 20](#_Toc313360560)

[Word Choice 20](#_Toc313360561)

[Tone 20](#_Toc313360562)

[Active or Passive Verbs? 20](#_Toc313360563)

[Flow 20](#_Toc313360564)

[Transitions 20](#_Toc313360565)

[Linking Words and Phrases 21](#_Toc313360566)

[Capitalization Rules 21](#_Toc313360567)

[When to Use Capitals 21](#_Toc313360568)

[When Not to Use Capitals 21](#_Toc313360569)

[Faulty Parallelism 22](#_Toc313360570)

[Dangling Modifier 22](#_Toc313360571)

[Misplaced Modifier 22](#_Toc313360572)

[Exercises 23](#_Toc313360573)

[Count vs. Non-count Noun Exercise 23](#_Toc313360574)

[Pronouns Exercise 23](#_Toc313360575)

[Simple, Complex & Compound Sentence Exercise 23](#_Toc313360576)

[Subjects and Verbs Exercise 24](#_Toc313360577)

[Making Subjects & Verbs Agree Exercise 25](#_Toc313360578)

[Making Tenses Agree Exercise 25](#_Toc313360579)

[Who/Whom, Whoever/Whomever Exercise 26](#_Toc313360580)

[Accept/Except Exercise 27](#_Toc313360581)

[Adjectives and Adverbs Exercise 27](#_Toc313360582)

[Semicolon Exercise 28](#_Toc313360583)

[Apostrophes Exercise 28](#_Toc313360584)

[Comma Exercise 28](#_Toc313360585)

[Punctuation Exercise **Error! Bookmark not defined.**](#_Toc313360586)

[Sentence Fragment Exercise 29](#_Toc313360587)

[Misused Words Exercise 30](#_Toc313360588)

[Parallel Structure Exercise 30](#_Toc313360589)

[A or An Exercise 23](#_Toc313360590)

# Welcome to Grammar!

This Grammar in a Nutshell guide is intended to provide you with a grammar deliverable for your students. The intention is that you will provide time in each class to allow for work on this portion.

## Parts of Speech

### Noun

A noun is a person, place or thing.

For example: dog, cat, house, sky, girl

#### Proper nouns and common nouns.

Proper nouns use a capital and identify someone or something very specifically.

*Name*: Emily, Susan, Bill

*Place*: Toronto, London

*Date*: Wednesday, Christmas, January

*Thing*: GM, Canada Post

#### Pronoun

These are words that take the place of a noun.

*Personal pronouns*: I, you, she, he, they.

*Reflexive pronouns*: Himself, herself, yourself, yourselves, myself, itself, ourselves.

*Intensive pronouns*: Myself, yourself, yourselves, himself, herself, itself, ourselves.

*Relative pronouns*: That, which, who, whom, whose.

*Interrogative pronouns*: Who? Whom? What? Which? Whoever?

*Indefinite pronouns*: Somebody, something, nobody, no one, anyone, anybody.

#### Count vs. Non-Count Nouns

Count nouns are those things that can be counted. Non-count nouns usually are things that cannot be counted.

**For example:** Count: Telephone

**For example:** Non-Count: Information

### Adjective

These are words that describe, qualify or modify a noun or pronoun. An adjective precedes the noun or pronoun in a sentence. There can be more than two adjectives qualifying a single noun

*Limiting Adjective*: This adjective is limited to the noun or pronoun that it describes.

*Possessive adjectives:* his, her, my, its, our, you, theirs

*Demonstrative:* this, that, these, those

*Numerical:* three, ten, five, tenfold

*Indefinite*: any, all, some, a few

*Interrogative*: which? where? who?

*Descriptive adjective*: A word or words that use an attribute or attributes to describe the noun or pronoun.

A *simple adjective* is one word use to describe the noun/pronoun: pretty, quaint, etc.

A *compound adjective* is two-word combinations use to describe the noun/pronoun: short-sighted, middle-aged, etc.

### Article

These are words which also describe the noun or pronoun. For example: a, an, the.

### Verb

This is the action word in the sentence. It states the action being performed or the state of being.

A verb can be one or more words, depending on its tense.

**For example:** Raging

Was raging.

Had been raging.

Transitive verbs These verbs have an object as a recipient.

The dog ate the food.

Intransitive verbs: There is no object receiving the action.

The wind howled ferociously.

Linking verbs: Express a state of being, not a state of action.

Elizabeth II became Queen upon her father’s death.

### Adverb

An adverb describes or modifies the verb, the adjective or another adverb.

**For example:** Finally demonstrated

Rather good

Very logically and precisely

These describe:

*Place* – answer the question where? here? there? in? out? down? up?

*Time* – answer the question when? now? later? earlier?

*Manner* – answer the question how? carefully? precisely? slowly? fast?

*Degree* –answer the question to what extent? Very? surely? completely?

*Inference and result* – ask how to join an idea? therefore? thus? consequently?

*Interrogative* – ask questions which cannot be answered yes or no. where? what? when? where?

### Preposition

This word shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence

Prepositions can include words such as:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| about | above | according to | across |
| after | against | along | along with |
| among | apart from | around | as |
| as for | at | because of | before |
| behind | below | beneath | beside |
| between | beyond | but\* | by |
| by means of | concerning | despite | down |
| during | except | except for | excepting |
| for | from | in | in addition to |
| in back of | in case of | in front of | in place of |
| inside | in spite of | instead of | into |
| like | near | next | of |
| off | on | onto | on top of |
| out | out of | outside | over |
| past | regarding | round | since |
| through | throughout | till | to |
| toward | under | underneath | unlike |
| until | up | upon | up to |
| with | within | without |  |

### Conjunctions

These words connect sentences or parts of sentences together. They are:

And, But, Or, Nor, For, So, Yet

*Coordinating conjunctions* join together sentences, and independent clauses (full sentences which can stand by themselves).

*Subordinating conjunctions* join together a full independent clause (a sentence which can stand b itself) and a dependent clause ( a partial sentence which cannot stand independently).

**For example:** After, Although, As, Because, Before, How, If, Once, Since, Than, That, Though, Till, Until," When, Where, Whether, While

*Interjections* express emotions, such as pain, surprise or anger.

**For example:** Ouch! Oh! Alas!

## Sentence Construction (Syntax)

Sentence construction, or syntax, is whether a sentence is a simple sentence, a complex sentence or a compound sentence.

### Simple Sentence

A *simple sentence* is one complete thought, containing a subject and a predict.

The *subject* of the sentence is a noun and usually appears at the beginning of the sentence.

The *predict* within the sentence is describes what the subject does or what it is like.

A *complex predict* consists of the complete verb and any modifiers.

**For example:** The boy caught and dropped the ball.

A *simple predict* consists of a complete verb.

**For example:** I slept in my bed.

The *direct object* is the word (or group of words) that receive the action. It answers the questions “who” or “what” after the verb.

**For example:** The winner accepted the award.

The *indirect object* comes before the object and describes to whom or from whom the action is received.

**For example:** She lent us money.

The *complement* follows a linking verb to complete its meaning and may be a predicate noun or adjective.

**For example:** He is a bully.

A *predicate adjective* modifies the subject of the verb.

For example: The panic was widespread.

A *modifier* is a word or group of words that limits a noun, a verb or a thought. It may be an adjective, adverb, prepositional phrase, participle, participle phrase, or infinitive phrase.

**For example:** The girl with the high cheek bones wore her hair up today.

**For example:** The contaminated areas are quarantined.

**For example:** The fire raged wildly.

**For example:** The pitcher with the sprained shoulder grimaced with pain.

**For example:** Your limp hair is not very attractive.

**For example:** In order to win, you have to play.

### The Compound Sentence

A *compound sentence* is created when two independent (main) clauses are joined with a coordinating conjunction.

Coordinating conjunctions are words such as: but, or, however, and, neither, either, nor, yet, also

### The Complex Sentence

A *complex sentence* has one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses (which can be adjectival, noun or adverbial).

A subordinate clause is not a sentence on its own, and cannot stand independently.

An adjectival clause modifies the noun or pronoun, like an adjective. This statement is introduced by a relative pronoun: who, which or that.

An *adverbial clause* modifies the verb, like an adverb. It modifies a verb, noun or adjective and answers the questions when, why, to what extent, on what condition? How?

A *subordinating conjunction* introduces adverbial clauses expressing a relationship of time (after, before, until, when, whenever, while, as), place (here, there), cause (as, because, since, when), manner, degree, result (that, so that, in order that), condition (if, thus, provided that), or concession (though, although, even though, notwithstanding that).

A *noun clause* behaves the same way as a noun. Noun clauses are introduced by words such as: that, who, what, why, when, whether.

### The Compound-Complex Sentence

This sentence has two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.

### Fragment Sentences

A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. The first word will start with a capital letter and the sentence ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point. However, the thought is incomplete.

### Common Problem Words

**Affect vs. Effect**

Affect *(v)* means “to influence.” Effect *(n)* means “result.”

There are times you may see effect used as a verb that means “to cause” and affect used as a noun that means “emotion.” The rule-of-thumb is to use affect when you need to show action and effect when you describe someone/thing.

**Between vs. Among**

Use *between* when referring to two objects or people. Use *among* when you’re talking about more than two objects or people.

**Its vs. It’s**

Its is the possessive form of “it.” It’s is the contracted form of “it is”.

**That vs. Which**

Use *that* in order to single something out. Commas are not used with *that*.

Use *which* if the clause is non-essential to the sentence. Commas are used only with which, as there is a pause.

Read your sentence out loud. Do you pause before and/or after the clause?

**Verb-subject Agreement**

Your subject and verb should always agree – singular, plural, etc.

When the clause that modifies the noun (the relative clause) begins with “one of”, the verb within the clause should be plural.

Two or more nouns joined by “and” (compounds), use plural verbs.

**Note:** Each, either, everyone, everybody, neither, nobody, and someone are singular.

## Punctuation

### Comma

Use a comma to separate two complete ideas or clauses.

**Note:** Read your sentence out loud. If you pause, insert a comma.

*The Parenthetical Clause*

You can also use commas around a parenthetical clause – one that could also be found in parentheses.

*The Compound Sentences*

Place a comma before the conjunction in a compound sentence. Conjunctions – such as and, but, or because—are used to connect two independent clauses

**Remember:** An independent is a sentence on its own, containing its own subject and verb. It is a complete thought by itself.

### Semicolon

Use a semicolon between two independent clauses not connected by a conjunction to indicate a close relationship between the ideas. You would otherwise use a period.

Also use a semicolon if the two clauses are separated by an adverb.

Do not use a semicolon to separate an independent and dependent clause.

*Semicolon Use in Lists*

Within lists, semicolons can be used in place of commas, even when individual items are more than one word.

### Colons

Use a colon to introduce an independent clause (or a phrase or word) that answers an implied question, or introduce a list of related items. It is generally preceded by an independent clause.

This is the latest in the current trend: creating our own documentation.

You need to bring the following items: pen, pencil, eraser, whiteout, paper.

### Dashes

Dashes are used in the same ways as commas and colons, although they are considered more forceful. They are used to separate off non-essential clauses and phrases. A pair of dashes convey more importance than commas and colons.

**For example:** The French Quarter – which survived the least damage when Katrina hit – is one of the most favourite tourist spots in New Orleans.

When used alone, using a dash is interchangeable with using a colon. It, allows you to expand on or to complete an idea. The dash is considered to be more abrupt.

**For example:** No one I asked recommended to go to the jungle for a vacation—in fact, everyone tried to talk me out of it.

The dash, when following a list, connects your current through to an independent clause.

The manner in which you speak, the words you choose, your mannerisms—all of these elements add up to make your presentation a success or a failure.

### Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are the inverted commas ( “ “) which surround a quote, a speech, or a literal title or name, and can be used to indicate a different – and ironic --meaning of a word or phrase than the one typically associated with it.

Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks.

Punctuation such as question marks are also placed within the quotation marks if the question is enclosed quotation marks. However, if the question is part, the question mark should be placed inside the quotation marks. Only one ending punctuation mark is used with considering quotation marks.

For example:

I asked, "Are you still my friend?"

Do you agree with the statement "What’s good for the goose is good for the gander"?

Single quotation marks are used for quotes within quotes and the period goes inside all quote marks.

For example:

He said, "Danea said, 'Do not treat me that way.'"

Use quotation marks to set off a direct quotation only, such as:

"When will you be here?" he asked.

**Note:** This can also be written as: He asked when you will be there.

Do not use quotation marks with a quote that is more than three lines long.

When you are quoting material containing spelling or grammar mistakes, use ***sic*** in italics and enclosed in square brackets to tell the reader that this is how the original material stated the information. For example: The e-mail stated, "I will attend to [*sic*] if my schedule permits."

### Apostrophes

An apostrophe can be used in a number of ways in the English language.

#### Contractions

Place the apostrophe where the letter has been removed, such as in don’t, isn’t, you’re, she’s.

#### Possession

Place the apostrophe before the s to show singular possession, or between the two second s if it is a plural, such as: one girls dress, one child’s book, Mr. James’s jacket, Ms. Peters’s calendar.

#### Replacing a Noun

Place an apostrophe where the noun is implied, such as: That is her sister’s, not her, album.

#### Plural Possession

To create a plural possession, pluralise the noun, and then use an apostrophe, such as: two students’ textbooks, the Jones’s house.

#### Plural Names

Do not use an apostrophe in the plural of a name, such as the Joneses in Scarborough or the Smiths from Melbourne.

#### Singular Compound Noun

The apostrophe and the s shows possession, such as “in my sister-in-law’s house”.

#### Plural Compound Noun

Pluralize the compound noun first, then insert the apostrophe, such as “my two in-law's fight over us at Christmas ever year”.

#### Multiple Possessions

If two people possess the same item, use the apostrophe and s after the second name only, such as: Stuart and Frank’s company will be twice as successful next year.

However, if each item is separate, use the apostrophe and s after each name, such as: Claire’s and John’s classrooms need major renovations.

#### Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns such as his, hers, its, theirs, ours, yours, and whose already show possession, therefore do not require an apostrophe. For example: “That purse is mine, not yours.”

#### It Is/It Has

Only use it's is when it is a contraction for it is or it has, such as “It’s so cold outside.” or “It’s been a great vacation.”

#### Abbreviations

The plurals for abbreviations are used as nouns do not require apostrophes. For example: “This company interviewed three PhDs before selecting the best candidate.”

However, to show possession, put the apostrophe on the outside of the plural. For example, “The four PhDs’ combined knowledge is invaluable to the company.”

You do not need an apostrophe for a plural of non-abbreviation combinations, such as “Learning your ABCs is done when you’re young.”

#### Numbers

You do not need to use an apostrophe when using a full date, such as: The 1990s were horrible for me.”

However, you will need to use it when you are abbreviating the date, such as: “The ‘80s were the best years for me.”

Use apostrophes with capital letters to ensure you are clear on your meaning, such as “Remember to dot your I’s and cross your T’s before sending the memo.”, or “Programming code in binary is made up of 1’s and 0’s.”

### Exclamation Points

The exclamation point shows emphasis or surprise. It is not typically used in formal business writing.

### Ellipsis Marks

Ellipsis (or dots or periods) are used when you omit information (such as a word, phrase, etc.) from a quote. Typically, three or four dots represent removed material.

##### Three Dot Method

Use three dots (periods) when you’ve removed information in the middle of a sentence or between sentences. Leave out punctuation such as commas that were in the original text. For example: “And to quote: “…We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices."--Charles Dickens (A Christmas Carol) or “Constitutional monarchy … is a form of government in which a monarch acts as head of state within the parameters of a constitution...

Also use the three dots that ends the preceding paragraph(s) when you omit one or more paragraphs within a long quotation.

### Periods

A period goes at the end of a complete sentence.

If the last word – such as an abbreviation like M.D. or etc. – in the sentence ends in a period, do not follow it with another period.

Insert a period after an indirect question such as: He asked where his key is.

### Question Marks

A question mark follows a direct question, such as: Do you agree?

If the sentence is half statement and half question, it ends with a question mark, such as: You like winning, don’t you?

### Spacing with Punctuation

A period, comma, semicolon, colon, exclamation point, question mark, and quotation mark require one space (press **Spacebar** once).

Follow punctuation with **two spaces** when using a fixed-pitch font on a typewriters and with some word processors.

There should be NO space on either side of a hyphen.

### Dashes

#### En Dash

An en dash is the width of the letter “n” and is used with dates. It is used in place of a hyphen or the word “to”. Do not use spaces around the en dash. For example: 1980-1989, Monday-Friday, university-alumni event.

#### Em Dash

An em dash is the width of the letter “m”. The em dash is most commonly used in informal writing to replace commas, semicolons, colons, and parentheses. It is used to add emphasis, as an interruption or an abrupt change of thought. Use an em dash sparingly in formal writing. For example: You are the person—the only employee company wide—who volunteered to take this project. You are the only person qualified to do this job—no one else could do it.

### Parentheses

Parentheses are another way of inserting secondary material to a thought – material which is non-essential, but useful, when explaining a thought. Parentheses contain material which, if removed, will not impact the audience’s understanding of the main message. Including this information helps the audience, but is not critical.

**For example:** Travelling in the winter time is harder than at other times of the year (in my opinion and personal experience) because you have to factor in the climate of the country to which you are travelling. You need to dress accordingly when travelling to the airport and anticipate the weather upon your return home.

A parenthetical statement can almost sound like a footnote and does not have to be perfectly integrated into a sentence.

**For example:** The tsunami of grief (‘tsunami’ here meaning the overwhelming emotion felt by the woman) when her dog died seemed completely appropriate considering how much her animal companions mean to her.

Parentheses can also enclose full sentences. The period goes inside the closing parenthesis:

### Plurals

#### Regular Plurals

A noun is made a regular plural when you add an “s”. For example, boys and girls.

The word is still a regular plural for words ending in sh, ch, s, z, or x. In this case, you add ‘es’ to the end to make it plural. For example, churches.

When a word ends in [consonant] + y, ‘y’ to ‘ie’ and adding ‘s’. For example, country becomes countries.

In compound nouns, the principal word becomes plural. For example, sons-in-law.

#### Irregular Plurals

An irregular plural is a noun which is made plural in any other way.

Certain words do not change, such as deer, sheep and moose.

Any noun ending in ‘fe’, change the ‘fe’ to ‘v’ and add ‘s’. For example, ‘knife’ becomes ‘knives’.

A noun ending in ‘f’, change the ‘f’ to ‘v’ and add ‘s’. For example, ‘wolf’ becomes ‘wolves’.

A noun ending in ‘o’, add an ‘es’ on the end. So, ‘potato’ becomes ‘potatoes’.

A noun ending in ‘us’, change the ‘us’ to ‘I’. For example, ‘cactus’ becomes ‘cacti’.

A noun ending with ‘on’, changes the ‘on’ to an ‘a’. For example, ‘phenomenon’ becomes ‘phenomena’.

#### All Kinds

If the noun includes all kinds in a group, you can:

1. Change the vowel or
2. Change the word or
3. Add a different ending

For example, ‘man’ becomes ‘men’, ‘goose’ becomes ‘geese’, ‘mouse’ becomes ‘mice’

#### Unchanging

There are some nouns that the singular and plural are the same. For example, we refer to ‘sheep’ and ‘deer’ in both the singular and plural with one word.

#### Odds and Ends

Pluralize symbols, numbers (including years), and uppercase letters by adding ‘s’. For example, ‘the 1990s’, ‘All the As on my tests.

Pluralize lowercase letters adding ‘s’ after the letter. For example, ‘How many s’s are in Mississippi?’.

Pluralize proper names by adding ‘s’ to the end of the name. However, if a proper name ends with an ‘s’, adding ‘es’. For example, ‘There are three Anns in the class. They work always hang around the Joneses families.’

Treat collective nouns (groups of people, animals, or things) as singular. To lay stress on the individual members rather than on the overall unit, treat the noun as plural. ‘The warren is home to a local herd of rabbits. A herd of rabbits are eating my crops.’

Possessives

A possessive noun implies ‘a’ or ‘of the’ before it.

**For example:** ‘The bone of the dog’ can be said “The dog’s bone’.

A possessive can be singular or plural.

#### Singular

Add an ‘s’ to the end of a noun to make it possessive.

**For example:** The girl’s blue knapsack.

#### Proper Names

Add ‘’s’ to a proper names to make it possessive.

**For example:** Lilly’s lipstick is a pretty shade of pink.

If a singular noun that ends in ‘s’, either add an ‘ ’s’ to the end of the word or place the apostrophe ‘ ’’ at the end of the word.

For example: Charles’ book, James’s car, Mr. Roberts’ case, Achilles’ tendon

#### Plural

Add an apostrophe ‘’’ or ‘’s’ to the end of a *singular plural noun* that ending in ‘s’ to make it possessive.

**For example:** ‘All the muscians’ / muscians’s instruments were stolen.’

Add an ‘’s’ to a *plural noun* that ends in a letter other than ‘s’ to make it possessive.

For example: ‘The churches’ tithes will rise in the new year to help them offset repair costs.’

#### Possessive Pronouns

Do not use an apostrophe to indicate possession for a possessive pronoun, or for the possessive form of it.

**For example:** ‘Is that your car? No, ours is the dark blue one at the end.’

#### It’s vs Its

The rule is: if you can replace ‘it’s’ with ‘it is’ or ‘it has’, use ‘it’s’.

For example: ‘It’s one of a kind.’ This can also be written: ‘It is one of a kind.’.

Otherwise, use ‘its’.

**For example:**  ‘The dog lost its collar.’.

Who, Whom, Whoever, Whomever

Use the he/him method to decide which word is correct.

he = who

him = whom

**For example:** Who wrote the letter. (He wrote the letter.)

**For example:** For whom do I vote? (I vote for him.)

Who vs. That vs. Which

#### For People and Things

The rule-of-thumb is: who refers to people; that and which refer to groups or things. For example: Linda is the one who loves animals. Teddy belongs to the organization that supports people with disabilities.

#### Clauses

That introduces essential clauses while which introduces non-essential clauses. For example, I don’t believe in that “green product” label because anybody can call their product green. The organisation promoting healthier living, which usually only advertises electronically, created a billboard on a well-travelled part of the highway.

Remember:

Essential clauses do **not** have commas surrounding them.

Nonessential clauses are surrounded by commas. These clauses can be removed and the sentence will still make sense.

Using ***this***, ***that***, ***these***, or ***those*** to introduce an essential clause allows you to use which to introduce the next clause, whether it is essential or nonessential. For example, That is a choice which you should think about very hard.

### Writing Numbers

There are very specific rules when we write out numbers.

Spell out single-digit whole numbers. Use numerals for numbers greater than nine.

Be consistent within a category. For example: Within the class, 10 students have dogs for pets and 8 people have birds for pets. Of the 30 students taking three classes per day, we can schedule 10 students in one class and make it equal.

Spell out simple fractions and use hyphens with them.

A mixed fraction can be expressed in figures unless it is the first word of a sentence.

Express large numbers in the simplest format. Round numbers are usually spelled out. Be careful to be consistent within a sentence. For example, You can earn anywhere from one million dollars to five million dollars.

Write decimals in figures. Put a zero in front of a decimal unless the decimal itself begins with a zero.

If the number includes a decimal point, use a comma only when the number has five or more digits before the decimal point. Place the comma in front of the third digit to the left of the decimal point. Use the comma where it would appear in the figure format. Use the word and where the decimal point appears in the figure format. For example, $25,500.50: Twenty-five thousand, five hundred dollars and fifty cents

When writing dates, use the appropriate abbreviation when the number preceeds the month. For example: June 30, 30th of June, April 1, 1st of April.

Write decades out in full, using lowercase. For example: During the nineties, a lot of companies closed show. If you are going to abbreviate them, include an apostrophe at the beginning. For example: During the ‘80s, there was a lot of excess.

If you write decades in complete numerals, don't use an apostrophe between the year and the s.

Normally, spell out the time of day in text even with half and quarter hours. With o'clock, the number is always spelled out. For example, At five o’clock every day, I start dinner.

Use numerals with the time of day when exact times are being emphasized or when using A.M. or P.M. For example, Classes start at 8:00 A.M. sharp.

Use noon and midnight rather than 12:00 P.M. and 12:00 A.M.

Hyphenate all compound numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine. For example, Forty-five dollars of your registration fee goes towards materials.

Write out a number if it begins a sentence. For example, 44 people registered for the course. Only 22 arrived for the training session.

## Common Style Mistakes

### Word Choice

#### Tone

The tone of your communication is determined by your word choice. You will hear a different tone in scientific journals, academic journals, or even in different newspapers or magazine. The tone selected for a communication is determined by two factors: your audience and your purpose.

You need to know your audience and your purpose before you begin writing.

Ask yourself (or whoever assigned the writing task to you) the following questions:

1. Who is my audience? A general public with little knowledge of the topic? A technical audience? An audience who knows a lot about the topic already?
2. What is the purpose of the communication? To influence opinion? To describe a situation? To inform the audience of a particular problem and present a resolution?

Answering these questions will determine the level of detail and the words you choose, and therefore create the tone in your communication/

#### Active or Passive Verbs?

In most cases, you are going to write using the active voice. This means that the subject of the sentence is doing something. Passive voice has the subject of the sentence being acted upon.

I broke the window. (Active voice)

The window was broken by me. (Passive voice)

Although there are some circumstances when passive voice is acceptable, it is generally accepted that you use the active voice (or active verb pattern) as frequently as possible.

Use of “I” or “We”

I is the first person singular subject pronoun, referring to the person performing the action.

We is the plural of two or more people performing an action.

I jogged for two hours last night.

We went to the movies last night. (As opposed to John, Mary and I went to the movies last night.)

### Flow

#### Transitions

The flow of a communication is how well your move your audience from one thought to the next. Transitional words aide you in doing this in a communication.

#### Linking Words and Phrases

The following list of words can assist you in making smooth transitions between ideas and create a smooth flow in your document: in addition, furthermore, moreover, because, as a result, hence, because of, as a result of, in other words, that is, i.e., on the other hand, in contrast, however, unlike, conversely, : for example, for instance, in fact, on the contrary, although, even though, despite the fact, however, nevertheless, in spite of.

### **Capitalization Rules**

#### When to Use Capitals

* the first word of a quoted sentences
* proper nouns
* a title when it precedes a name
* a title when it follows the name on the address or signature line
* a title of high-ranking government official (when it is used before their names)
* any title used as a direct address
* compass points when they refer to specific regions (for example: Three relatives from the South arrived yesterday.)
* compass points referring to a street name/address
* the first and last words of titles of publications regardless of their parts of speech
* words within titles, including the short verb forms Is, Are, and Be
* federal or state when used as part of an official agency name or in government documents where these terms represent an official name
* department, bureau, and office if you have already set the term (for example: Canadian Wheat Bureau. The Bureau overseas….)
* the first word of a salutation and the first word of a complimentary close
* words derived from proper nouns
* specific course titles
* when two or more sentences follow a sentence ending with a colon

#### When Not to Use Capitals

* a civil title if it is used instead of the name
* a title that is acting as a description following the name
* words within titles such as a, an, the, but, as, if, and, or, nor, or prepositions
* federal or state when used as part of an official agency name or in government documents being used as general terms
* names of seasons
* the first word if it begins a list following a colon
* when only one sentence follows a sentence ending with a colon

Faulty Parallelism

Parallel sentence are sentences in which the elements appear in a list or series, in compound structures, in comparisons using that or as, and in contrasted elements, when two or more parts of the sentence are parallel in meaning and form. Most faulty parallel sentences occur when elements within the sentence do no agree.

**For example:** She prepared her essays slowly and with care. (faulty)

She prepared her essays slowly and carefully. (correct)

He enjoys riding his bike and to read novels. (faulty)

He enjoys riding his bike and reading novels. (correct)

I like to shop, travel and listening to music. (faulty)

I like shopping, travelling and listening to music. (correct)

I like to shop, travel and listen to music. (correct).

Dangling Modifier

A *dangling modifier* is a word or phrase, usually at the start of a sentence that does not connect properly to the rest of the sentence, because it is placed so far away from what it is describing.

**For example:** Having been thrown across the room, the dog caught the bone. (dangling)

The dog caught the bone thrown across the room. (correct)

Misplaced Modifier

A *misplaced modifier* is a word or phrase incorrectly placed and appears to be describing the wrong thing.

**For example:** That student has nearly annoyed every professor she has had. (misplaced modifier)

The student has annoyed nearly every professor she has had. (correct)

How to Correctly Do Internet Research

Correctly using the MLA/APA formats

Creating Effective Thesis statements?

# Exercises

Complete the exercises below and submit to your instructor for marking.

Count vs. Non-count Noun Exercise **/6**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Count** | **Non-Count** |
| Assignment |  |  |
| Vocabulary |  |  |
| Candidate |  |  |
| Honesty |  |  |
| Letter |  |  |
| Homework |  |  |

Pronouns Exercise **/8**

Select from the following words to complete each of the sentences below:

Me, myself, I, themselves, yourselves, ourselves, himself, herself, each other, itself

1. I can recommend Mars bars. In fact, I have bought two \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Jack and Jill are good sports. They don’t mind making fools of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. We will complete most of the project \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at home.

5. I couldn’t treat you any better if you were the Queen of Sheba \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

6. Help \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the buffet.

7. Maurice bought \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a new suit.

8. Jane really knows how to enjoy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

A or An Exercise **/6**

In the following phrases, supply either "a" or "an":

1. \_\_\_ bingo game
2. \_\_\_ idiot
3. \_\_\_ rotten plum
4. \_\_\_ used fork
5. \_\_\_ uncle
6. \_\_\_ historian

Simple, Complex & Compound Sentence Exercise **/8**

Identify each type of sentence. Write Simple, Complex or Compound beside the sentence.

1. John took the bus home after school.
2. Monica was not impressed with her peer’s conduct in class.
3. As soon as I heard the news, I rushed straight to the hospital.
4. Give the customer service representative your personal information, we will contact you when the new Whirlpool fridge come in.
5. Dave understands the Simply Accounting exercises; he has mastered the subject.
6. Kay goes to the library and studies every day.
7. When he handed in his assignment, he forgot to give the instructor the last page.
8. I tried to speak French, and my friend tried to speak English.

Subjects and Verbs Exercise **/8**

Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice.

1. He depends on her in times of need.
2. (You) Watch your step.
3. The insurance agent gave her sound advice.
4. On the table was her purse.
5. In the newspaper, an interesting article appeared.
6. (You) Look before you leap.
7. Across the road lived her boyfriend.
8. We are forced to inhale and exhale this smog-filled air.

Making Subjects & Verbs Agree Exercise **/8**

Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. If the subjects and verbs do not agree, change the verbs to match the subjects.

1. At the end of the story, they was living happily ever after.
2. Al and Ali go to the alley to watch gambling.
3. When Al and Ali arrive, they will notice that the games has already stopped.
4. The group of children from that school has never seen the ocean.
5. If our staff don't quit picking at each other, we will not meet our goals.
6. Either Gary or I are responsible for allocating the funds.
7. Neither she nor they were willing to predict the election results.
8. Nora is one of the candidates who is worthy of my vote.

Punctuation Exercise **/8**

Put in semicolons, colons, dashes, quotation marks, Italics (use an underline), and parentheses where needed in the following sentences.

1. The men in question Harold Keene, Jim Peterson, and Gerald Greene deserve awards.
2. Several countries participated in the airlift Italy, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg.
3. Judge Carswell later to be nominated for the Supreme Court had ruled against civil rights.
4. In last week's New Yorker, one of my favourite magazines, I enjoyed reading Leland's article How Not to Go Camping.
5. Yes, Jim said, I'll be home by ten.
6. There was only one thing to do study till dawn.
7. Montaigne wrote the following A wise man never loses anything, if he has himself.
8. Darwin's On the Origin of Species 1859 caused a great controversy when it appeared.

Making Tenses Agree Exercise **/8**

Singular subjects need singular verbs; plural subjects need plural verbs.

Insert the word “is” or “are” to complete each sentence.

1. Accounting \_\_\_\_\_\_ my favourite subject.
2. Those \_\_\_\_\_nice triOS sweatshirts.
3. The liberals \_\_\_\_\_ extremely powerful.
4. One of my peers \_\_\_\_\_ coming over for lunch.
5. A number of us \_\_\_\_\_ happy with your service
6. The rest of the student body \_\_\_\_\_ coming later.
7. Business communication \_\_\_\_\_a very important course.
8. There \_\_\_\_\_ a couple of points to make.

Who/Whom, Whoever/Whomever Exercise **/8**

Choose the correct word for each sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is your closest friend?
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ do you bank with?
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ do you think will win the award?
4. Clare knows \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the winner is already.
5. Bill will talk about his girlfriend with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ asks him.
6. Patty donates her time to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ needs it most.
7. Larry will work on the project with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you suggest.
8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was that in the clown costume?

Accept/Except Exercise **/8**

Fill in the blank with either accept or except.

1. The whole army is out of step \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fred.
2. I'll \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ no money from that cheapskate.
3. Please \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this pot of Mama's chicken soup.
4. It will cure anything \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ flat feet.
5. Rip could do anything \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ make money.
6. I had to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ their negative evaluation.
7. All the girls went to the game \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mary.
8. Howard could not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the job.

Adjectives and Adverbs Exercise **/8**

Identify each adjective or an adverb. Determine if it is being used correctly. If it is not correct, correct it.

1. Come quick or we will miss our bus.
2. You drive so slow that I am afraid someone will hit the car from behind.
3. I have never been more surer of anything in my life.
4. Ella was the best of the two sisters at gymnastics.
5. You did that somersault so good.
6. Helen felt badly about forgetting Hank's birthday.
7. This is the worst oil spill I have ever seen.
8. The jasmine has bloomed and smells very sweet.

Semicolon Exercise **/5**

Correct any punctuation errors in the following sentences.

1. You asked for forgiveness, he granted it to you.
2. We ask; therefore, that you keep this matter confidential.
3. The order was requested six weeks ago, therefore I expected the shipment to arrive by now.
4. Clothes are often made from synthetic material, for instance, rayon.
5. I have been to Montreal, Toronto, Halifax, London, Windsor and Guelph.

Apostrophes Exercise **/8**

Correct any apostrophe errors.

1. Her husbands wallet was full of curious, little items.
2. I went to my mother-in-laws house for dinner last night.
3. You may not enter Mr. Harriss office without his permission.
4. The girls vitality and humour were infectious. (one girl)
5. The womens dresses are on the second floor.
6. Its a shame that had to happen.
7. Its hard to believe that winter is almost here.
8. Her mother and fathers business went bankrupt.

Comma Exercise **/8**

Correct any comma errors. Some sentences need no correction.

1. I took Angie the one with the freckles, to the movie last night.
2. Bill and I, have had our share of arguments.
3. You are I am sure, telling the truth.
4. She left Albany, New York on January 18 of that year.
5. I need sugar, butter, and eggs, from the grocery store.
6. Please Jack, come home as soon as you can.
7. Although you may be right I cannot take your word for it.
8. We will grant you immunity if you decide to cooperate with us.

Sentence Fragment Exercise **/8**

The sentences below appeared in papers written by students. Act as their editor, marking a C if the sentences in the group are all complete and an F if any of the sentences in the group is a fragment. If the sentence is incomplete (fragmented) suggest a correction.

1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. A junior high that was a bad experience.

1. The scene was filled with beauty. Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind.

1. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.

1. Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them.

1. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.

1. It can be really embarrassing to be so emotional. Especially when you are on your first date, you feel that you should be in control.

1. The magazine has a reputation for a sophisticated, prestigious, and elite group of readers. Although that is a value judgment and in circumstances not a true premise.

1. In the seventh grade every young boy goes out for football. To prove to himself and his parents that he is a man.

Misused Words Exercise **/10**

Circle the correct word.

1. He accepted / excepted their praise, graciously.
2. Will lack of sleep affect / effect your game?
3. I advise / advice you to be cautious.
4. Despite a head injury, the patient remained conscious / conscience.
5. Mickey was the idea / ideal for tutors everywhere.
6. The crab had an unusual growth on its / it’s shell
7. The evidence lead / led the jury to reach a unanimous decision.
8. I would rather dance then / than eat.
9. I went to / too the store with Mabel as I was hungry to / too.
10. At last I was all ready to go, but everyone had all ready / already left.

Parallel Structure Exercise **/5**

Make the following sentences parallel. Write the corrected sentence underneath each sentence.

1. She likes to listen to music and reading the latest novels.
2. He spent his time studying Spanish. working at the convenience store, and jog every afternoon.
3. The apartment was filled with old newspapers, broken bottles, and the ashtrays were overflowing.
4. Mary wanted to paint her office, to add some new draperies, and the carpet needs cleaning.
5. When Friday rolls around, do you go to the mall, head for a bar, or are you going to work?