

“switch codes”—that is, to move from a local dialect into Standard English—whenever the occasion demands it. Knowing how to make your writing conform to the conventions of Standard English whenever the audience and the occasion call for it is also a good practice.

This section first shows you ten common problems facing all writers of Standard English sentences. You can use the list to test yourself and as a checklist for your own writing. Cross-references in parentheses direct you to detailed discussions in sections 38–46. If you feel you need to brush up on the grammatical conventions of Standard English, turn to sections 37b–37e for a review of basic principles and common terminology. You might also find the Glossary of Grammatical Terms (see 66) helpful if class discussion uses terms you are not entirely familiar with. Computer grammar checkers may alert you to possible grammar problems. However, they have not reached a high level of linguistic sophistication, so you need to weigh whatever they suggest and not automatically act on every suggestion.

37a

Top ten sentence problems

1. Phrase fragments To be complete, a sentence must have both a subject and a verb. A phrase fragment lacks a subject, a verb, or both. Identify phrase fragments, and edit to attach them to a sentence that contains a subject and a verb (38a).

► She never talks about her inner feelings; **Her feelings of fear or of joy.**

2. Clause fragments A dependent clause must always be connected to an independent clause. If you begin a sentence with *when*, *because*, *although*, or some other subordinating conjunction, connect that clause to an independent clause (38b).

► ^{because} The play failed/**Because it received three bad reviews.**

3. Run-on sentences and comma splices Separate or revise independent clauses that are connected incorrectly (see 39).

► He trained hard, ^{He} he never considered the strain.

► The city is lively; ^{the} the restaurants and clubs are open late.

► The film has been released; ^{however,} however, it has not come to our theater.

4. Fuzzy syntax Look for sentences that might make readers say “Huh?” sentences that begin in one way but end in another, mixing constructions (40a). Readers should be able to tell clearly who (or what) is doing what (30a).

► In the essay “Notes of a Native Son” ^{his} by James Baldwin discusses . . .

5. Wrong verb forms Be sure to use standard verb forms. Avoid nonstandard forms, such as *bring*, *has went*, *should of went*, *have being noticed*, *have drank* (41a).

6. Tense shifts Avoid flip-flopping between past and present time (41b).

► ^{writes} Foote wrote about Shiloh and describes its aftermath.

7. Lack of subject-verb agreement A singular third person subject (*he*, *she*, *it*, or a singular noun) takes a singular verb, with an -s ending in the present tense (43a); a plural subject takes a plural verb. Check carefully for verbs with -s endings. Look for and edit nonstandard forms.

► the owner ^{has} have ► the author ^s suggest
 ► she ^{doesn't} don't ► It ^s pose a problem.

► The students in the class ^s likes peer response.

8. Faulty pronoun case and reference Check that subject and object pronouns are correct (44a), and avoid ambiguous or unclear pronoun references (44c).

► ^{My sister and I} Me and my sister went to Florida.

► The incident in the story reminds me of my mother and I. ^{me}

► When Dean and George crossed the border with two ^{customs officers} friends, they searched all the luggage.

9. **Adjective/adverb confusion** Use the right forms of adjectives and adverbs in the right places (45a–45c).

- ▶ They did ^{well} **good** in the playoffs.
- ▶ They managed to compete ^{really} **real well** in the playoffs.

10. **Double negatives** Double negatives can be vibrant in speech and are customary in some dialects, but avoid them in formal writing (45g).

- ▶ They don't have ^{any} **no** problems with that.
- ▶ He ^{can} **can't** hardly wait.

37b Parts of speech

Words are traditionally classified into eight categories called *parts of speech*. See the Glossary of Grammatical Terms (66) for further definitions and examples.

KEY POINTS

Using the Parts of Speech

Nouns Words that name a person, place, thing, or concept—*teacher, valley, furniture, Hinduism*—are called nouns. When you use a noun, determine the following: Is it a proper noun, requiring a capital letter? Does it have a plural form? If so, are you using the singular or plural form? See 60a ESL.

Pronouns Words that are substitutes for a noun, a noun phrase, or another pronoun—*she, his, those, themselves, whom, whoever, anyone*—are called pronouns. When you use a pronoun, determine the following: What word or words in the sentence does the pronoun refer to? Does the pronoun refer to a noun or pronoun that is singular or plural? See 43b, 43i, 43j, 44a, 44h, and 46a.

Verbs Words that tell what a person, place, thing, or concept does or is—*smile, throw, think, seem, become, be*—are called verbs. Verbs change form to refer to present or past time. Every clause needs a

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verb. When you use a verb, determine the following: What time does the verb refer to? What auxiliary or modal verbs are needed? Is the subject of the verb singular or plural? Is the verb in the active voice or passive voice? What are the five forms of the verb (*sing, sings, singing, sang, sung*), and are you using the correct form? For more on verbs, see 41, 42, and 43.

Adjectives Words that describe nouns—*purple, beautiful, big*—are called adjectives. An adjective can precede a noun (*purple boots*) or follow a linking verb: *Her boots are purple*. Also functioning as adjectives (before a noun) are *a, an, and the*, as well as many pronouns: *a cabbage, an allegory, their shoes*. For more on adjectives, see 45.

Adverbs Words that provide information about verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or clauses are called adverbs. Many but not all adverbs end in *-ly*: *efficiently, undoubtedly*. Adverbs provide information about “how” or “when”: *very, well, sometimes, often, soon*. Conjunction adverbs—*however, therefore, furthermore*—make connections between independent clauses. See also 2d and 45.

Conjunctions Words that connect single words, phrases, and clauses are called conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions—*and, but, or, nor, so, for, yet*—connect ideas of equal importance. Subordinating conjunctions—*because, if, when, although, for instance*—make one clause dependent on another. Consider the meaning before using a conjunction. See 31c and 37e.

Prepositions Words used before nouns and pronouns to form phrases that convey relationships such as of time and space (*in the poem, throughout the day, behind her, without a doubt, for you*) are called prepositions. Prepositional phrases are often idiomatic: *on occasion, in love*. To understand their use and meaning, consult a good dictionary. See also 63 ESL.

Interjections Words that express emotion and can stand alone—*Hal! Wow! Light! Ouch! Say!*—are called interjections. Use them only in informal writing.

37c Common sentence patterns

A sentence in English usually consists of a *subject* (the person or thing doing the action) and a *predicate* (a comment or assertion about that subject). A subject can be a word, a phrase, a clause, or a combination.

A predicate must always include a verb. Note that a subject may consist of a head word (a simple subject) along with its modifiers.

subject predicate

► He left.

► The boss of the successful new computer company left the elegantly furnished conference room.

Here are some common sentence patterns, with different types of predicates (described in brackets):

Subject + [Verb] The basic pattern for a sentence in English is a simple subject followed by a verb: S + V.

► Babies cry.

Even when additional elements appear, the subject and verb maintain their key positions.

► All the babies in the hospital nursery are crying.

ESL Note Not all languages require a subject and a verb. English requires both. See 38c and 62a ESL. ■

Subject + [Verb + Direct Object] The direct object completes the meaning of the verb.

► Many people wear glasses.

In that sentence, the direct object (DO) completes the meaning of the verb by telling what many people wear. Verbs that take a direct object are known as *transitive verbs*.

► The artist who lives in the large apartment on the sixth floor owns five cute Weimaraner puppies.

Intransitive verbs, such as *cry*, *lie* (meaning “recline”), *sit*, and *rise*, do not take a direct object.

Subject + [Verb + Subject Complement] Some verbs, like *be*, *seem*, *look*, and *appear*, are linking verbs. They are followed by a subject complement (SC)—a noun or an adjective that refers to and names or describes the subject.

► The players on the visiting team look fit.

Subject + [Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object] Verbs such as *give*, *send*, and *offer* can be followed by an indirect object, naming the person or thing to whom or for whom the action of the verb takes place, and by a direct object (62c ESL).

► The director of the play gave his leading lady one exquisite rose.

Subject + [Verb + Direct Object + Object Complement] The object complement (OC) refers to and renames or describes the direct object.

► They named the football star Rookie of the Year.

[Verb +] A command is the only type of sentence that has an implied rather than a stated subject. The subject of a command is always *you*.

► [You] Leave me alone!

[Verb] + Subject: inverted word order In Standard English sentences, the verb precedes the subject only in specific contexts—usually in questions and after *here* and *there*. Here are the patterns that you are most likely to read or use in your writing:

► Is she ambitious? ► Here comes the rain.

► There were hundreds of people at the rally.

Inverted word order is also used after *rarely*, *seldom*, *rarely*, *not only*, and phrases used initially for emphasis (see 34d).

► Rarely have we seen such a spectacle.

► Next to the church stands a dilapidated barn.

37d Phrases

A group of words that lacks a subject, a verb, or both is a *phrase*. A phrase cannot be punctuated as a sentence. Phrases perform a number of grammatical functions.

Noun phrases

- ▶ An elegant sequined evening gown was on sale.
 - _____ noun phrase as subject _____
- ▶ She bought an elegant sequined evening gown.
 - _____ noun phrase as object _____
- ▶ Her latest purchase, an elegant sequined evening gown, now hangs in her closet.
 - _____ appositive noun phrase (47d) _____

Verb phrases A verb phrase consists of all the words that together make up the complete verb of a clause. (A *complete* verb indicates time—when the action mentioned in the sentence takes place; see 41a and 41c).

- ▶ That embarrassing letter should have been destroyed years ago.
 - _____ verb phrase (complete verb) _____

Verbal phrases Some phrases begin with parts of verbs. These parts of verbs (called *verbals*) never form a complete verb. Verbals are the present participle (*-ing*), the past participle (*-ed*), or the infinitive form of a verb. A *participle phrase* can never stand alone as a sentence.

- ▶ Frightened by her own loud heartbeat, she tried to stay calm.
 - _____ past participle phrase _____
- ▶ Noises heard from afar seem louder at night.
 - _____ past participle phrase _____
- ▶ Hurrying across the grass, she heard a loud crash.
 - _____ -ing participle phrase _____

A *participle phrase* at the beginning of a sentence must always describe the subject; otherwise, it is a dangling modifier (40c), as in *Hurrying across the grass, a loud crash startled her.* (The *crash* was not hurrying; *she* was.)

An *-ing* phrase can function as a noun. When it does, it is known as a *gerund*.

- ▶ The blaring of a car horn made her angry.
 - _____ -ing noun phrase (subject) _____

- ▶ He enjoys singing in the rain.
 - _____ -ing noun phrase (object) _____

An *infinitive phrase* (*to* + verb) performs various functions.

- ▶ To return to Beijing was her dream.
 - _____ (subject) _____
- ▶ To return to Beijing, she took a job as an English teacher.
 - _____ (adverb) _____
- ▶ She had a plan to return to Beijing.
 - _____ (adjective) _____

Prepositional phrases A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and a noun or pronoun, called the *object* of the preposition. Prepositional phrases usually function as adjectives or adverbs.

- ▶ Without fail, the eerie music from the park began at midnight.
 - prepositional phrase _____
 - _____ (adverb) _____
 - prepositional phrase _____
 - _____ (adjective) _____
 - prepositional phrase _____
 - _____ (adverb) _____

Absolute phrases An absolute phrase begins with a noun phrase followed by a verbal or a prepositional phrase. It contains no verb form that indicates tense. An absolute phrase modifies a whole sentence and is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

- ▶ She stood in suspense, the changing noises growing louder.
 - _____ absolute phrase, modifying the whole sentence _____
- ▶ Her thoughts in turmoil, she decided to consult a lawyer.
 - _____ modifying the whole sentence _____

ESL NOTE A phrase beginning with an adjective modifies a noun or pronoun and comes after the noun or pronoun it modifies (62b ESL).

- ▶ The person responsible for the profits refused to take credit.
 - _____ phrase used as an adjective after a noun, not before _____

37e Clauses

Clauses either stand alone (*independent*) or depend on another clause for their full meaning. A *dependent clause* must be part of a sentence containing an independent clause.

Independent clauses An independent clause is a group of words that contains at least a subject and a verb and can be punctuated as a sentence when standing alone. In each sentence you write, the predicate should include a complete verb and make a comment or assertion about the subject. (For commands, see 37c.)

SUBJECT	PREDICATE
Eyesight	deteriorates.
Many people	wear glasses.
Audre Lorde	is a poet.
Lorde's poems and essays	make one think.

A subject can also be a verb form used as a noun (an *-ing* participle [gerund] or an infinitive) or a dependent clause.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE
<i>-ing</i> form (gerund)	is not everything.
Winning	is more important.
infinitive phrase	
To do one's best	
dependent clause	
How the Players train	makes all the difference.

CONNECTING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES: COORDINATION Use a coordinating conjunction—*and*, *but*, *or*, *not*, *so*, *for*, *yet*—usually preceded by a comma, to connect two independent clauses in one sentence (31c.)

▶ **Thomas Wolfe's manuscript was 1,100 pages, but his editor cut it substantially.**

Dependent clauses A dependent (or subordinate) clause contains a subject and a predicate but cannot stand alone. A clause beginning with a subordinating conjunction, such as *if*, *when*, *because*, *although*, *since*, *who*, *which*, *that*, or *whether*, needs to be attached to an independent clause. The idea in a dependent clause is subordinate to the idea in the independent clause.

A sentence can contain any number of independent and dependent clauses, but it must always contain at least one independent clause. Never punctuate a dependent clause alone as a sentence (see 38).

CONNECTING CLAUSES BY SUBORDINATION By attaching a dependent clause to an independent clause—using *subordination*—you provide information about the relationship between clauses.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSES The two-way radio had rechargeable batteries and no usage fees. She decided to buy it.

COMBINED BY SUBORDINATION dependent clause, showing reason
Because the two-way radio had rechargeable batteries independent clause
and no usage fees, she decided to buy it.

Dependent clauses fall into three types, according to their role in a sentence.

DEPENDENT ADVERB CLAUSES Adverb clauses provide information about the verbs, adjectives, or adverbs in an independent clause. They answer questions such as *when*, *how*, *where*, *why*, *for what purpose*, and *to what extent*, and they express logical relationships between ideas. Adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

time: when, whenever, until, till, before, after, while, once,
as soon as, as long as
place: where, wherever
cause: because, as, since
condition: if, even if, unless, provided that
contrast: although, though, even though, whereas, while
comparator: than, as, as if, as though
purpose: so that, in order that
result: so . . . that, such . . . that

As a general rule, if the dependent clause precedes the independent clause, use a comma to separate the two clauses.

▶ dependent clause comma independent clause
If you send that memo, the columnist will be angry.

Ordinarily, no comma is needed when the dependent clause follows the independent clause.

▶ **The columnist will be angry if you send that memo.**

However, when the dependent clause is nonrestrictive (that is, adds information that contrasts rather than modifies and limits), it is set off with a comma (47d).

▶ **My boss prefers phone calls, whereas I like e-mail.**

DEPENDENT ADJECTIVE CLAUSES Adjective clauses (also called *relative clauses*; see 46) provide information about nouns or pronouns. The subordinating words that introduce adjective clauses are relative pronouns, such as *who, whom, whose, which, and that*.

- ▶ The kick that brought the crowd to its feet broke the impasse.
 - adjective (relative) clause
- ▶ The soccer player whose head is bowed missed a kick.
 - adjective (relative) clause

DEPENDENT NOUN CLAUSES A noun clause functions like a noun in a sentence. Noun clauses are introduced by subordinating words such as *what, that, when, why, how, whatever, who, whom, whoever, and whoever*. (A clause that you can replace with the pronoun *something* or *someone* is a noun clause.)

- ▶ He wants to know what he should do.
 - noun clause
 - something
- ▶ The fans wish that the match could be replayed.
 - noun clause = something
- ▶ Whoever scores a goal will be a hero.
 - noun clause = someone

38 Sentence Fragments

A fragment is a group of words incorrectly punctuated as if it were a complete sentence. Usually you can fix a fragment by connecting it to a closely related sentence in your text.

KEY POINTS

The Requirements of a Sentence

To be complete, a sentence (other than a command) must contain the following:

1. A subject *They were arguing*
- ▶ They drove for six days, *arguing all the way.*

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2. A complete verb *were*
- ▶ We watched the rehearsal. The jugglers practicing for four hours.
3. An independent clause *because*
- ▶ The spectators shrieked, because the race was so close.

Advertisers and writers occasionally use fragments deliberately for a crisp, immediate effect: "What a luxury should be." "Sleek lines." "Efficient in rain, sleet, and snow." "A magnificent film." However, you should identify and correct them in your formal writing.

38a Identifying and correcting a phrase fragment

A phrase is a group of words that lacks a subject, a verb, or both (37d). A phrase fragment is a phrase incorrectly punctuated as if it were a complete sentence.

- ▶ He wanted to make a point. To prove to everyone that he was capable.
 - ▶ Althea works every evening. Just trying to keep up with her boss's demands.
 - ▶ Ralph talked for hours. Elated by the company's success.
 - ▶ They kept dialing the boss's phone number. With no luck.
 - ▶ A prize was awarded to Ed. The best worker in the company.
 - ▶ Nature held many attractions for Thoreau. First, the solitude.
- Methods of correcting a phrase fragment*
1. Attach the phrase to a nearby independent clause.

- ▶ He wanted to make a point, ^{to} ~~to~~ prove to everyone that he was capable. [Simply remove the period and capital letter.]
 - ▶ A prize was awarded to Ed, ^{the} ~~the~~ best worker in the company. [Use a comma before an appositive phrase, and remove the capital letter.]
 - 2. Change the phrase to an independent clause.
 - ▶ Althea works every evening, ^{She is just} ~~just~~ trying to keep up with her boss's demands. [Add a subject and a complete verb.]
 - ▶ Nature held many attractions for Thoreau. First, ^{he valued} ~~the~~ solitude. [Add a subject and a verb.]
 - 3. Rewrite the whole passage.
 - ▶ Ralph ^{was so} ~~talked for~~ hours, ^{elated} ~~by~~ the company's success. [Make the fragment into a clause, and connect it to another clause with a subordinating word—in this case, one showing a result.]
- A dependent clause beginning with a subordinating word (p. 291) such as *because, if, unless, when, whenever, while, although, that, which, or who* (or with a question word such as *how, what, or why*) cannot stand alone. It must be attached to an independent clause.
- ▶ The family set out for a new country. A country in which they could practice their culture and religion.
 - ▶ Lars had always wanted to be a stand-up comic. Because he liked to make people laugh.
 - ▶ Rosa often talks about her relationship with her parents. How she grew up following her family's values.

Methods of correcting a dependent clause fragment

1. Connect the dependent clause to an independent clause (and delete any unnecessary repetition).
 - ▶ The family set out for a new country. A country in which they could practice their culture and religion.
 - ▶ Rosa often talks about her relationship with her parents, ^{and how} ~~how~~ she grew up following her family's values.
2. Delete the subordinating conjunction (see the list on p. 291). The dependent clause then becomes an independent clause, which can stand alone.
 - ▶ Lars had always wanted to be a stand-up comic. Because he liked to make people laugh.

Note: A subordinating conjunction at the beginning of a sentence does not always signal a fragment. A correctly punctuated sentence may begin with a subordinating conjunction introducing a dependent clause, as long as the sentence also contains an independent clause.

- ▶ ^{subordinating conjunction} When the circus arrives in town, ^{comma} the elephants parade along the main street.

38c Identifying and correcting a fragment with a missing verb or verb part

Every sentence must contain a complete verb in an independent clause. A word group that is punctuated like a sentence but lacks a verb or has an incomplete verb is a fragment. A complete verb is a verb that shows tense (see 41a and 41c).

- ▶ Overcrowding is a problem. Too many people living in one area.
- ▶ The candidate explained his proposal. A plan for off-street parking.

Methods of correcting Supply all necessary verb forms, or recast the sentence.

- ▶ Overcrowding is a problem. Too many people ^{are} living in one area.
- ▶ Overcrowding is a problem. ^{with too} too many people living in one area.
- ▶ The candidate explained his proposal. A plan for off-street parking.
- ▶ The candidate explained his proposal. ^{He emphasized a} A plan for off-street parking.

38d Identifying and correcting a fragment with a missing subject

Unless it is a command with the implied subject *you*, a word group appearing without a subject is a fragment.

- ▶ The commuters were staring hopefully down the track. ^{fragment: missing subject} Just wanted to get to work on time.

Methods of correcting

1. Include an appropriate subject to form an independent clause.
 - ▶ The commuters were staring hopefully down the track. ^{They just} just wanted to get to work on time.

ESL Note Never omit an *it* subject in a clause. If you do, the clause becomes a fragment.

- ▶ The essay won a prize because ^{it} was so well researched. ■
- 2. Turn the fragment into an *-ing* participle phrase, and attach it to the independent clause.
 - ▶ The commuters were staring hopefully down the track. ^{just wanting} just wanted to get to work on time.

38e Identifying and correcting a fragment with only one part of a compound predicate

A compound predicate (one with two parts joined by *and*, *but*, *or*, or *nor*) should not be split into two sentences. If you write a sentence with one subject and a compound predicate, both parts of the predicate must appear in the same sentence.

- ▶ After an hour, the dancers changed partners. ^{fragment} And adapted to a different type of music. [The compound predicate is “*changed partners and adapted to a different type of music*.”]

Method of correcting Correct the fragment by removing the period and capital letter.

- ▶ After an hour, the dancers changed partners, ^{and} And adapted to a different type of music.

38f Using fragments intentionally

Fragments are used frequently in advertisements to keep the text short. In academic writing, writers sometimes use a fragment intentionally for emphasis after a question, as an exclamation, or at a point of transition.

- ▶ Is this unease what Kincaid intends? Maybe.

When you are writing academic papers in college, use intentional fragments sparingly, if at all. Readers of your academic writing might not realize when a fragment is intentional.

39 Run-ons and Comma Splices

39a Identifying run-on (or fused) sentences and comma splices

If two independent clauses run together without any punctuation between them, the error is called a *run-on sentence* or *fused sentence*. If only a comma appears between them with no coordinating conjunction, the error is called a *comma splice*. A comma splice error also occurs when a comma and a transitional expression join two independent clauses. (See 2d, 31c, and 47e on transitional expressions.) As with

fragments, you will find comma splices and run-ons used in advertising and other writing for stylistic effect.

- It's not that I'm afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens.
comma splice for stylistic effect
 —Woody Allen, *Without Feathers*

However, in formal academic writing, prefer more conventional punctuation.

RUN-ON (FUSED) SENTENCES

- My mother's name is Marta my father's name is George.
independent clause independent clause
- Success is their goal happiness comes a close second.
independent clause independent clause

COMMA SPLICES

- The train picked up speed, the scenery flashed by.
independent clause comma not sufficient independent clause
- Salmon swim upstream, they leap over huge dams to reach their destination.
independent clause comma not sufficient independent clause
- Some parents support bilingual education, however, many oppose it vociferously.
independent clause comma not sufficient transitional expression independent clause

39b Correcting run-on sentences and comma splices

You can correct run-ons and comma splices in the following five ways. Select the one that works best for the sentence you are editing.

Method 1 Separate the independent clauses into individual sentences with a period (or question mark or exclamation point, if required).

- Success is their goal happiness comes a close second.
Happiness
- Beavers cut down trees with their teeth they use the trees for food and shelter.
They

Method 2 Separate the independent clauses with a semicolon if clauses are joined by a transitional expression or if their ideas closely related.

- Some parents support bilingual education, however, many oppose it vociferously.
- The hummingbird is amazing, its wings beat fifty to seventy-five times per second.

Method 3 Separate the independent clauses with a comma and coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, so, for, yet*).

- My mother's name is Marta, and my father's name is George.
- Woodpeckers look for insects in trees, but they do not intentionally destroy live trees.

Method 4 Make one clause dependent by adding a subordinating conjunction (see the list on p. 291).

- Whenever the beavers dammed up the river, the rise in the water level destroyed the trees.
- The scenery flashed by, when the train picked up speed.

Method 5 Make one clause a phrase beginning with an *-ing* part, and attach the phrase to the remaining independent clause.

- Salmon swim upstream, leaping over huge dams to reach their destination.

40 Sentence Snarls

Sentences with structural inconsistencies make readers pause to untangle the meaning. This section points out how to avoid or edit common snarls.

40a Avoid fuzzy syntax.

Revise sentences that begin in one way and then veer off the track, parting from the original structure. When you mix constructive make faulty comparisons, or tangle your syntax (sentence structure)

Include apostrophes with words that need them.

- ▶ My mother's expectations differed from Jing-Mei's mother's. See also 45i and 48c.

40j State the grammatical subject only once.

Even when a phrase or clause separates the subject and main verb of a sentence, do not restate the subject in pronoun form. (See also 62f ESL.)

- ▶ The nurse who took care of my father for many years ^{related subject} gave him comfort and advice.
- When the subject is a whole clause, do not add an *it* subject.
- ▶ What may seem moral to some ~~it~~ is immoral to others.

40j Aim for parallelism.

The use of parallel structures helps produce cohesion in a text. Aim for parallelism in sentences and in longer passages. The following sentence contains parallel -ing phrases:

- ▶ They really enjoy *playing* volleyball, *bicycling* on country roads, and *smoking* in the Gulf waters.

Sentences become confusing when you string together phrases or clauses that lack parallelism.

NOT PARALLEL He wants a new girlfriend, to get a house, and find a good job.

PARALLEL He wants a new girlfriend, a house, and a good job.

Parallel structures with paired (correlative) conjunctions When your sentence contains correlative conjunctions, pairs such as *either...or*, *neither...nor*, *not only...but also*, *both...and*, *whether...or*, and *as...as*, the structure after the second part of the pair should be exactly parallel in form to the structure after the first part.

- ▶ He made up his mind *either* to paint the van *or* ^{to} sell it to another buyer. [*To paint* follows *either*; therefore, *to sell* should follow *or*.]

- ▶ She loves *both* swimming competitively ^{playing} and to play golf. [*An -ing* form follows *both*; therefore, an *-ing* form should also follow *and*.]

- ▶ The drive to Cuernavaca was *not only* too expensive *but also* was too tiring to do alone. [*Too expensive* follows *not only*; therefore, *too tiring* should follow *but also*.]

Parallel structures in comparisons When making comparisons with *as* or *than*, use parallel structures.

- To drive
- ▶ Driving to Cuernavaca is *as* expensive *as* to take the bus.
- Taking
- ▶ To take the bus is less comfortable *than* driving.

41 Verbs

A verb will fit into one or more of the following sentences:

- They want to _____. It is going to _____.
- They will _____. It will _____.

Identify a verb by checking that the *base form* (that is, the form listed as a dictionary entry) fits these sentences.

41a Verb forms in Standard English

Although you might use a variety of verb forms when you speak, readers generally expect formal writing to conform to Standard English usage. All verbs except *be* have five forms.

The five forms of *regular verbs* follow a predictable pattern. Once you know the base form, you can construct all the others:

- base form: the form listed in a dictionary;
- s-form: the third person singular form of the present tense;
- ing form (the *present participle*): needs auxiliary verbs to function as a complete verb; can appear in a verbal phrase (see 37d) and as a noun (gerund);
- past tense form: functions as a complete verb, without auxiliary verbs;

5. past participle: often called the *-ed/en* form; needs auxiliary verbs to function as a complete verb (*has chosen, was chosen*); can appear in a phrase (*the chosen few; chosen for efficiency*).

REGULAR VERBS			
-ing			
PRESENT			
BASE	-s	PARTICIPLE	PAST TENSE
paint	paints	painting	paint
smile	smiles	smiling	smiled

In contrast, *irregular verbs* do not use *-ed* to form the past tense and the past participle. (See 41c for the forms of the irregular verb *be*.)

IRREGULAR VERBS			
-ing			
PRESENT			
BASE	-s	PARTICIPLE	PAST TENSE
take	takes	taking	took
go	goes	going	went

The following list shows some common irregular verbs. Notice the past tense form and past participle of each one.

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
arise	arose	arisen
bear	bore	born
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bet	bet	bet, betted
bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbad(e)	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten, got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
hang*	hung	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid (see also 41b)
lead	led	led
leave	left	left

*Hang meaning "put to death" is regular: *hang, hanged, hanged*.

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain (see also 41b)
light	lit, lighted	lit, lighted
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
put	put	put
quit	quit	quit
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen (see also 41b)
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set (see also 41b)
shake	shook	shaken
shine	shone	shone
shoot	shot	shot
shrink	shrank	shrank
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat (see also 41b)
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid
slit	slit	slit
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
spin	spun	spun
spit	spit, spat	spit
split	split	split
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
sting	stung	stung
stink	stank, stunk	stunk
strike	struck	struck, stricken
swear	swore	sworn
sweep	swept	swept
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
tread	trod	trodden, trod
understand	understood	understood
upset	upset	upset
wake	woke	waked, woken
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
weep	wept	wept
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

41b Verbs commonly confused

You may need to give special attention to certain verbs that are similar in form but differ in meaning. Some of them can take a direct object; these are called *transitive verbs*. Others never take a direct object; these are called *intransitive verbs*. (See also 37c and 62c ESL.)

1. *rise*: to get up, to ascend (intransitive)

raise: to lift, to cause to rise (transitive)

BASE	-s	-ing	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
rise	rises	rising	rose	risen
raise	raises	raising	raised	raised

► The sun *rose* at 5:55 a.m. today.

► She *raised* the blind and peeked out.

2. *sit*: to occupy a seat (intransitive)

set: to put or place (transitive)

BASE	-s	-ing	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
sit	sits	sitting	sat	sat
set	sets	setting	set	set

► He *sat* on the wooden chair.

► She *set* the vase on the middle shelf.

3. *lie*: to recline (intransitive)

lay: to put or place (transitive)

lie	lies	lying	lay	lain
lay	lays	laying	laid	laid

► I *laid* down for half an hour.

lying

► I was *laying* down when you called.

Lay

► *Hie* the map on the floor.

In addition, note the verb *lie* ("to say something untrue"), which is intransitive.

lie	lies	lying	lied	lied
-----	------	-------	------	------

► He *lied* when he said he had won three trophies.

41C The forms of *be*, auxiliaries, and modal auxiliaries

The verb *be* has eight forms, including three present tense forms (*am*, *is*, *are*) and two past tense forms (*was*, *were*).

PRESENT		PAST	
BASE	TENSE FORMS	-ing	PARTICIPLE
be	am, is, are	being	was, were
			been

For more on the distinction between *bring* and *bein*, see page 314.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language and Dialect Variation with *Be*

In some languages (Chinese and Russian, for example), forms of *be* used as an auxiliary ("She is singing") or as a linking verb ("He *is* singing").

(Continued)

is happy") can be omitted. In some spoken dialects of English (African American Vernacular, for example), subtle linguistic distinctions not possible in Standard English can be achieved: the omission of a form of *be* and the use of the base form in place of an inflected form (a form that shows number, person, mood, or tense) signal entirely different meanings.

VERNACLULAR

He busy. (temporarily)

She be busy. (habitually)

STANDARD

He is busy now.

She is busy all the time.

Standard English always requires the inclusion of an inflected form of *be*.

► Latecomers are always at a disadvantage.

An independent clause needs a complete verb. The *-ing* form and the past participle are not complete verbs because they do not show tense. They need auxiliary or modal auxiliary verbs to complete their meaning in a clause. (See 61b ESL for the meanings of modal auxiliary verbs.)

AUXILIARY VERBS

do: does, do, did

be: be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been

have: has, have, had

MODAL AUXILIARY VERBS

will, would

can, could

may, might, must

Auxiliary verbs and modal auxiliary verbs can be used in combination. Whatever the combination, the form of the main verb is determined by the auxiliary that precedes it, as in the following examples.

WHICH FORM SHOULD I USE?

1. After *do*, *does*, *did*, and the nine modal auxiliaries—*will*, *would*, *can*, *could*, *shall*, *should*, *may*, *might*, and *must*—use the base form.

► He *should stay*.

► They *must have dinner* soon.

► *Did she leave*?

ESL Note A modal auxiliary never changes form or takes an *s*-ending. ■

2. After *has, have, and had*, use the past participle.

- ▶ *It has snowed.*
- ▶ *They should have gone*
[not *They should have went!*]
- ▶ *They had eaten when I arrived.*

In informal speech, we run sounds together, and the pronunciation may be mistakenly carried over into writing.

- ▶ *She should of left that job last year.*
have

The pronunciation of the contraction *should've* is probably responsible for the nonstandard form *should of*. Edit carefully for the appearance of the word *of* in place of *have* in verb phrases.

3. After *be, am, is, are, was, were, and been*, use the *-ing* form for active voice verbs.
- ▶ *She is taking her driving test.* ▶ *You were watching.*
 - ▶ *He might have been driving.* ▶ *They could be jogging.*

ESL Note To form a complete verb, always use a *be* auxiliary before the *-ing* form. The *-ing* form alone can never be a complete verb in a clause. See 61a ESL. ■

4. After *be, am, is, are, was, were, been, and being*, use the past participle for passive voice (see 42).

- ▶ *They were taken to a tropical island for their anniversary.*
- ▶ *The faucet should be fixed.*
- ▶ *The pie might have been eaten.*
- ▶ *The suspects are being watched.*

ESL Note *Be* requires a modal before it to form a complete verb (*could be jogging; will be closed*). *Been* requires *have, has, or had* (*have been driving; has been eaten*). *Being* must be preceded by *am, is, are, was, or were* to form a complete verb and must be followed by an adjective or a past participle: *You are being silly. He was being followed*. ■

41D Verb tenses

Tenses indicate time as perceived by the speaker or writer. Verbs change form to indicate present or past time. (To indicate future time, English uses the modal auxiliary *will* as well as expressions such as *be going to*.) Closely related to tense is *aspect*, which allows a speaker or writer to indicate that an action is completed or in progress. For each time (present, past, and future), auxiliary verbs are used with the main verb to convey completed actions (perfect forms), actions in progress (progressive forms), and actions that are completed by some specified time or event and also emphasize the length of time in progress (perfect progressive forms).

The following examples illustrate aspects of active voice verbs referring to past, present, and future time. For passive voice verbs, see 42.

PAST TIME

Simple past

They arrived yesterday. / They did not arrive today.

Past progressive

They were leaving when the phone rang.

Past perfect

Everyone had left when I called.

Progressive

We had been sleeping for an hour before you arrived.

PRESENT TIME

Simple present

He eats Wheaties every morning. / He does not eat eggs.

Present progressive

They are working today.

Present perfect

She has never read Melville.

Progressive

He has been living here for five years.

FUTURE TIME (USING WILL)

Simple future

She will arrive soon.

Future progressive

They will be playing baseball at noon tomorrow.

Future perfect

He will have finished the project by Friday.

Future perfect progressive

By the year 2004, they will have been running the company for twenty-five years.

Other modal auxiliaries can substitute for *will* and thus change the meaning: *must arrive, might be playing, may have finished, should have been running.* (See 61b ESL.)

ESL Note Use simple tenses but not progressive forms with verbs expressing mental activity referring to the senses, preference, or thought, as well as with verbs of possession, appearance, and inclusion (for example, *smell, prefer, understand, own, seem, contain*),

- ▶ They ~~are~~ ^{possess} possessing different behavior patterns.
- ▶ I ~~am~~ ^{smell} smelling a rat. ■

41e Present tenses

Simple present Use the simple present tense for the following purposes:

1. To make a generalization
 - ▶ We **turn** the clocks ahead every April.
2. To indicate an activity that happens habitually or repeatedly
 - ▶ He **works** for Sony.
 - ▶ They **take** vacations in Puerto Rico.
3. To discuss literature and the arts even if the work was written in the past or the author is no longer alive
 - ▶ In *Zami*, Audre Lorde **describes** how a librarian **introduces** her to the joys of reading.

When used in this way, the present tense is called the *literary present*. However, when you write a narrative of your own, use past tenses to tell about past actions.

- ▶ Then the candidate ~~walks~~ ^{walked} up to the crowd and ~~kisses~~ ^{kissed} all the babies.

ESL Note In a dependent clause beginning with a conjunction such as *if, when, before, after, until, or as soon as*, do not use *will* to express future time. Use *will* only in the independent clause. Use the simple present in the subordinate clause.

- ▶ When they ~~will~~ arrive, the meeting **will** begin. ■

Present progressive Use the present progressive to indicate an action in progress at the moment of speaking or writing.

- ▶ He **is playing** pool with his nephew.

Present perfect and present perfect progressive Use the present perfect in the following instances:

1. To indicate that an action occurring at some unstated time in the past is related to present time
 - ▶ They **have worked** in New Mexico, so they **know** its laws.
2. To indicate that an action beginning in the past continues to the present
 - ▶ They **have worked** in New Mexico for three years.

If you state the exact time when something occurred, use the simple past tense, not the present perfect.

- ▶ They ~~have worked~~ ^{worked} in Arizona three years ago.

Use the present perfect progressive when you indicate the length of time an action has been in progress up to the present time.

- ▶ They **have been dancing** for three hours.
[This implies that they are still dancing.]

41f Past tenses

Use the past tenses consistently. Do not switch to present or future for no reason (see 41h).

Simple past Use the simple past tense when you specify exactly when an event occurred.

- ▶ She **married** him last month.

When the sequence of past events is indicated with words like *before* or *after*, use the simple past for both events.

- ▶ She **knew** how to write her name **before** she **went** to school.

Past progressive Use the past progressive for an activity in progress over time or at a specified point in the past.

- ▶ They **were working** all day yesterday.
- ▶ He **was lifting** weights when I called.

Past perfect Use the past perfect or the past perfect progressive only when one past event was completed before another past event or stated past time.

- ▶ Ben *had cooked* the whole meal by the time Sam arrived.

[Two events occurred: Ben cooked the meal; then Sam arrived.]

- ▶ He *had been cooking* for three hours when his sister finally offered to help.

[An event in progress—cooking—was interrupted in the past.]

Make sure that the past tense form you choose expresses your exact meaning.

- ▶ When the student protesters marched into the building at noon, the administrators *were leaving*. [The administrators were in the process of leaving. They began to leave at, say, 11:57 a.m.]

- ▶ When the student protesters marched into the building at noon, the administrators *had left*.

[There was no sign of the administrators. They had left at 11 a.m.]

- ▶ When the student protesters marched into the building at noon, the administrators *left*.

[The administrators saw the protesters and then left at 12:01 p.m.]

41g -ed endings: past tense and past participle forms

Both the past tense form and the past participle of regular verbs end in *-ed*. This ending causes writers trouble because in speech the ending is often dropped—particularly when it blends into the next sound.

- ▶ They wash_{ed} two baskets of laundry last night.

Standard English requires the *-ed* ending in the following instances.

1. To form the past tense of a regular verb

- ▶ He ask_{ed} to leave early.

2. To form the expression *used to*, indicating past habit

- ▶ They use_d to smoke.

3. To form the past participle of a regular verb for use with the auxiliary *has, have, or had* in the active voice or with forms of *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been* in the passive voice (see 42)

- ▶ She has work_{ed} there for a long time. [Active]

- ▶ The work will be finish_{ed} tomorrow. [Passive]

4. To form a past participle for use as an adjective

- ▶ Put in some chop_{ped} meat. ▶ The frighten_{ed} boy ran away.

Note: The following *-ed* forms are used with *be* or *get*: *concerned, confused, depressed, divorced, embarrassed, married, prejudiced, satisfied, scared, surprised (to), surprised, used (to), worried*. Do not omit the *-d* ending.

- ▶ I was surprise_d to see how many awards he had won.

- ▶ The general was suppose_d to be in charge.

- ▶ Parents get worry_{ed} when their children are depress_{ed}.

Do not confuse the past tense form and the past participle of an irregular verb. A past tense form stands alone as a complete verb, but a past participle does not.

- ▶ He drank_{ed} too much last night. ▶ You could have went_{ed} alone.

- ▶ She done_{ed} her best. ▶ The bell was rang_{ed} five times.

41h Avoiding unnecessary tense shifts

If you use tenses consistently throughout a piece of writing, you help readers understand what is happening and when. Check that your verbs consistently express present or past time, both within a sentence and from one sentence to the next.

TENSE SHIFTS Selecting a jury *was* very difficult. The lawyers *ask* many questions to discover bias and prejudice; sometimes the prospective jurors *had* the idea they *are* acting in a play.

REVERSED Selecting a jury *was* very difficult. The lawyers *asked* many questions to discover bias and prejudice; some times the prospective jurors *had* the idea they *were* acting in a play.

When you write about events or ideas presented by another writer, use the literary present (see 41e).

▶ The author illustrated the images of women in two ways, using advertisements and dramas on TV. One way shows women who advanced their careers by themselves, and the other shows those who used beauty to gain recognition.

Tense shifts are appropriate in the following instances:

- When you signal a time change with a time word or phrase
 1. When you signal a time change with a time word or phrase
 signal for switch from past to present
 ▶ Harold *was* my late grandfather's name, and *now* it is mine.
- When you follow a generalization (present tense) with a specific example of a past incident
 2. When you follow a generalization (present tense) with a specific example of a past incident
 generalization
 ▶ Some bilingual schools offer intensive instruction in English.
 specific example
 My sister, for example, went to a bilingual school where she studied English for two hours every day.

41i

Tenses in indirect quotations

An indirect quotation reports what someone said. It does not use quotation marks. When the verb introducing an indirect quotation is in a present tense, the indirect quotation should preserve the tense of the original direct quotation. See also 40d and 62d ESL.

DIRECT "The client has signed the contract."

INDIRECT The lawyer tells us that the client has signed the contract.
 present indirect quotation

When the introductory verb is in a past tense, use forms that express past time in the indirect quotation.

DIRECT "The meetings are over and the buyer has signed the contract."

INDIRECT Our lawyer told us that the meetings were over and the buyer had signed the contract.
 past direct quotation

In longer passages, preserve the sequence of tenses showing past time throughout the whole indirect quotation.

▶ Our lawyer, Lorraine, told us that the meetings were over and the buyer had signed the contract. Lorraine's firm had reassigned her to another case, so she was leaving the next day.

Note: Use a present tense after a past tense introductory verb only if the statement is a general statement that holds true in present time.

▶ Our lawyer told us she is happy with the progress of the case.

41j

Verbs in conditional sentences, wishes, requests, demands, and recommendations

Conditions When *if* or *unless* is used to introduce a dependent clause, the sentence expresses a condition. Four types of conditional sentences are used in English; two refer to actual or possible situations, and two refer to speculative or hypothetical situations. The Key Points box gives examples of these four types.

KEY POINTS

Verb Tenses in Conditional Sentences

MEANING EXPRESSED

IF CLAUSE

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

1. Fact
 ▶ If people *earn* more, they *spend* more.
 Simple present Simple present

2. Prediction/
 possibility
 ▶ If you *turn* left here, you *will* end up in Mississippi.
 Simple present will, can, should, might + base form

3. Speculation
 about present or future
 ▶ If you *turn* left here, you *would* end up in Mississippi.
 Simple past or subjunctive would, could, should, might + base form
 (Continued)

(Continued)

- ▶ If he *had* a cell phone, he *would* use it.
[But he does not have one.]
- ▶ If she *were* my lawyer, I *might win* the case.
[But she is not.]

4. Speculation
about pastPast perfect
(*had* + past
participle)

<i>would have</i>	} + past participle
<i>could have</i>	
<i>should have</i>	

might have

- ▶ If they *had saved* the diaries, they *could have sold* them.
[But they did not save them.]

Use of SUBJUNCTIVE *Were* in Place of *Was* With speculative conditions about the present and future using the verb *be*, *were* is used in place of *was* in the dependent *if* clause. This use of *were* to indicate hypothetical situations involves what is called the *subjunctive mood*.

- ▶ If my aunt *were* sixty-five, she *could get* a discount air fare.
[My aunt is sixty.]

BLENDING Some blending of time and tenses can occur, as in the case of a condition that speculates about the past in relation to the effect on the present.

- ▶ If I *had bought* a new car instead of this old wreck, I *would feel* a lot safer today.

Use of *Would* When writing Standard English, use *would* only in the independent clause, not in the conditional clause. However, *would* occurs frequently in the conditional clause in speech and in informal writing.

- ▶ If the fish fry committee *would show* more initiative, people might attend their events more regularly.

- ▶ If I *would have* heard him say that, I *would have* been angry.

***Would*, *Could*, and *Might* with Conditional Clause Understood** *Would*, *could*, and *might* are used in independent clauses when no conditional clause

is present. These are situations that are contrary to fact, and the conditional clause is understood.

- ▶ I *would never advise* her to leave college without a degree. She *might come back* later and blame me for her lack of direction.

Wishes Like some conditions, wishes deal with speculation. For a present wish—about something that has not happened and is therefore hypothetical and imaginary—use the past tense or subjunctive *were* in the dependent clause. For a wish about the past, use the past perfect: *had* + past participle.

AWISH ABOUT THE PRESENT

- ▶ I wish I *had* your attitude.
- ▶ I wish that Shakespeare *were* still alive.

AWISH ABOUT THE PAST

- ▶ Some union members wish that the strike *had never occurred*.
- ▶ He wishes that he *had bought* a lottery ticket.

Requests, demands, and recommendations The subjunctive also appears after certain verbs, such as *request*, *command*, *insist*, *demand*, *move* (meaning “propose”), *propose*, and *urge*. In these cases, the verb in the dependent clause is the base form, regardless of the person and number of the subject.

- ▶ The dean suggested that students *be allowed* to vote.
- ▶ He insisted that she *submit* the report.
- ▶ I move that the treasurer *revise* the budget.

Some idiomatic expressions preserve the subjunctive in standard English—for example, *far be it from me, if need be, as it were*.

42 Passive Voice

In the active voice, the grammatical subject is the doer of the action, and the sentence tells “who’s doing what.” The passive voice tells what is *done* to the subject of the sentence. The person or thing doing the action may or may not be mentioned but is always implied: “My car was repaired” (by somebody at the garage).

ACTIVE

▶ Alice Walker ^{subject} ^{active voice verb} wrote ^{direct object} *The Color Purple*.

PASSIVE

▶ *The Color Purple* ^{subject} ^{passive voice verb} was written ^{doer or agent} by Alice Walker.

42a

Know when to use the passive voice.

Use the passive voice sparingly. A general rule is to use the passive voice only when the doer or agent in your sentence (the person or thing acting) is unknown or is unimportant (see 42c) or when you want to connect the topics of two clauses (see 31a and 42d).

- ▶ The pandas are rare. Two of them will be returned to the wild.

ESL Note Use the passive voice only with verbs that are transitive in English. Intransitive verbs such as *happen*, *occur*, and *try (to)* are not used in the passive voice.

- ▶ The ceremony **was** happened yesterday.

- ▶ Morality is an issue that **was** tried to explain by many philosophers.

42b

Know how to form the passive voice.

The complete verb of a passive voice sentence consists of a form of the verb *be* followed by a past participle.

- receiver verb: be + past participle doer omitted or named after by
- ▶ The windows **are cleaned** (by someone) every month.

- ▶ The windows **were being cleaned** yesterday afternoon.

- ▶ The windows **will have been cleaned** by the end of the workday.

Auxiliaries such as *would*, *can*, *could*, *should*, *may*, *might*, and *must* can also replace *will* when the meaning demands it.

- ▶ The windows **might be cleaned** next month.

- 42c** Use passive voice when the doer or agent is unknown or unimportant.

- ▶ He had a lot of people working for him, maybe sixty, and most of them liked him most of the time. Three of them *will be seriously considered* for his job. —Ellen Goodman, “The Company Man”

In scientific writing, the passive voice is often preferred to indicate objective procedures. Scientists and engineers are interested in analyzing data and in performing studies that other researchers can replicate. The individual doing the experiment is therefore relatively unimportant and usually is not the subject of the sentence.

- ▶ The experiment *was conducted* in a classroom. Participants *were instructed* to remove their watches prior to the experiment.

If you are writing in the humanities, however, question each use of the passive voice, and ask yourself whether you need it.

- 42d** Use the passive voice to connect the subject of a sentence to what has gone before.

Notice how the passive voice preserves the topic chain of *I* subjects in the following passage (see also 31a):

- ▶ I remember to start with that day in Sacramento [...] when I first entered a classroom, able to understand some fifty stray English words. The third of four children, I had been preceded to a Roman Catholic school by an older brother and sister.

—Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger for Memory*

- 42e** Do not overuse the passive voice.

Generally your writing will be clearer and stronger if you name the subject and use verbs in the active voice to tell “who’s doing what.” If you overuse the passive voice, the effect will be heavy and impersonal (see 30a).

UNNECESSARY **REVISER** He *was alerted* to the danger of drugs by his doctor and *was persuaded* by her to enroll in a treatment program.

REVISER His doctor alerted him to the danger of drugs and persuaded him to enroll in a treatment program.

43 Subject-Verb Agreement

In standard English, a third person singular subject takes a singular verb (with *-s*), and a plural subject takes a plural verb (with no *-s*).

SINGULAR SUBJECT

PLURAL SUBJECT

A baby *cries*.Babies *cry*.He *loses*.They *lose*.His brother *plays* baseball.His brothers *play* baseball.

43a Basic principles of subject-verb agreement

When you use the present tense, subject and verb must agree in person (first, second, or third) and number (singular or plural). In English, the ending *-s* is added to both nouns and verbs, but for very different reasons.

1. An *-s* ending on a noun is a plural signal: *her brother^s* (more than one).
2. An *-s* ending on a verb is a singular signal: *-s* is added to a third person singular verb in the present tense: *Her plumber wear^s gold jewelry*.

KEY POINTS

Two Key Points about Agreement

1. Follow the “one *-s* rule.” Generally, you can put an *-s* on a noun to make it plural, or you can put an *-s* on a verb to make it singular. (But see the irregular forms *is* and *has*, on p. 327.) An *-s* on both subject and verb is not Standard English.

FAULTY AGREEMENT
[Violates the “one *-s* rule”]
My friends **comes** over every Saturday.

POSSIBLE REVISIONS
My friend **comes** over every Saturday.

My friends **come** over every Saturday.

(Continued)

(Continued)

2. Do not omit a necessary *-s*.

- ▶ His supervisor want ^s him to work the night shift.
- ▶ The book ^s on my desk describe life in Tahiti.
- ▶ She uses her experience, *speaks* to the crowds, and *win* ^s their confidence.

Most simple present verbs show agreement with an *-s* ending. The verb *be*, however, has three instead of two present tense forms. In addition, *be* is the only verb to show agreement in the past tense, where it has two forms: *were* and the third person singular *was*.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

BASE FORM

like

have

be

do

SIMPLE PRESENT: SINGULAR

First person: I

like

have

am

do

Second person: you

like

have

are

do

Third person: he, she, it

likes

has

is

does

SIMPLE PRESENT: PLURAL

First person: we

like

have

are

do

Second person: you

like

have

are

do

Third person: they

like

have

are

do

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Issues of Subject-Verb Agreement

Many languages make no change in the verb form to indicate number and person, and several spoken versions of English, such as London Cockney, Caribbean Creole, and African American Vernacular (AAV), do not observe the standard rules of agreement.

- ▶ Cockney: He *don't* never wear that brown whistle.

[The standard form is *doesn't*; other nonstandard forms in this sentence are *don't never* (a double negative) and *whistle*—short for *whistle and flute*, rhyming slang for *suit*.]

- ▶ AAV: She *have* a lot of work experience.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Use authentic forms like these when quoting direct speech, for your formal academic writing, though, follow the subject-verb agreement conventions of Standard English.

ESL Note Modal auxiliaries never add an -s ending and any verb form following immediately must be a base form: I *can sing*; she *should go*; he *might be leaving*; she *will have* been promoted (41c and 61b ESL). ■

43b Words between the subject and verb

When words separate the subject and verb, find the verb and ask “Who?” or “What?” about it to determine the subject. Ignore the intervening words.

- ▶ The **child** picking flowers looks tired.

[Who looks tired? The subject, *child*, is singular.]

- ▶ Her **collection** of baseball cards is valuable.

[What is valuable? The subject, *collection*, is singular.]

- ▶ The government’s **proposals** about preserving the environment cause controversy.

[What things cause controversy? The subject, *proposals*, is plural.]

Do not be confused by intervening words ending in -s, such as *always* and *sometimes*. The -s ending still must appear on a present tense verb if the subject is singular.

- ▶ His **assistant** always **make** mistakes.

Phrases introduced by *as well as*, *along with*, and *in addition to* that come between the subject and the verb do not change the number of the verb.

- ▶ His daughter, as well as his two sons, **want** him to move nearby.

43c Agreement with linking verbs and complement

Linking verbs such as *be*, *seem*, *look*, and *appear* are followed by a complement, and a subject complement should not be confused with

a subject (see 37c). Make the verb agree with the subject stated before the linking verb, not with the noun complement that follows the verb.

- ▶ Rare **books** are her passion. (plural subject, plural verb)
- ▶ Her **passion** is rare **books**. (singular subject, singular verb)

- ▶ My favorite part of city life **is** the parties.

- ▶ Parties **are** my favorite part of city life.

43d Subject after verb

When the subject follows the verb in the sentence, make the subject and verb agree.

- Questions** In a question, the auxiliary verb agrees with the subject.

- ▶ **Does** the editor agree to the changes? (singular subject, singular verb)
- ▶ **Do** the editor and the production manager agree to them? (plural subject, plural verb)

- Initial here or there** When a sentence begins with *here* or *there*, the verb agrees with the subject.

- ▶ **There is** a reason to rejoice. (singular subject, singular verb)
- ▶ **There are** many reasons to rejoice. (plural subject, plural verb)

However, avoid excessive use of initial *there* (see 30b): *We have a reason to rejoice*.

ESL Note It does not follow the same pattern as *here* and *there*. The verb in a sentence beginning with *it* is always singular.

- ▶ **It is** hundreds of miles away. ■

- Inverted word order** When a sentence begins not with the subject but with a phrase preceding the verb, the verb still agrees with the subject (see also 34d and 37c).

► *In front of the library sit two stone lions.*
prepositional phrase — verb — plural subject

[Who or what performs the action of the verb? Two stone lions do.]

43e Tricky singular subjects

1. **Each and every** *Each and every* may seem to indicate more than one, but grammatically they are singular words, used with a singular verb.

► Each of the cakes *has* a different frosting.

► Every change in procedures *causes* problems.

2. **-ing verb form as subject** With a subject beginning with the -ing verb form (called a *gerund*), always use a singular verb form.

► singular subject Playing the piano in front of a crowd *causes* anxiety.

3. **Singular nouns ending in -s** Some nouns that end in -s (*news, economics, physics, politics, mathematics, statistics*) are not plural. Use them with a singular verb.

► The news *has* been bad lately. ► Politics *is* dirty business.

4. **Phrases of time, money, and weight** When the subject is regarded as one unit, use a singular verb.

► Five hundred dollars *seems* too much to pay.

► Seven years *was* a long time to spend at college.

5. **Uncountable nouns** An uncountable noun (*furniture, jealousy, equipment, advice, happiness, honesty, information, knowledge*) encompasses all the items in its class. An uncountable noun does not have a plural form and is always followed by a singular verb (60b ESL).

► That advice *makes* me nervous.

► The information found in the press *is* not always accurate.

6. **One of** *One of* is followed by a plural noun (the object of the preposition *of*) and a singular verb form.

► *One of her friends loves* tango.

► *One of the reasons for his difficulties is that he spends too much money.*

For agreement with *one of* and *the only one of* followed by a relative clause, see 46c.

7. **The number of/a number of** The phrase *the number of* is followed by a plural noun (the object of the preposition *of*) and a singular verb form.

► The number of reasons *is* growing.

With *a number of*, meaning "several," use a plural verb.

► A number of reasons *are* listed in the letter.

8. **The title of a work or a word referred to as the word itself** Use a singular verb with the title of a work or a word referred to as the word itself. Use a singular verb even if the title or word is plural in form. See also 52a and 52c.

► Cats *has* finally ended its long run on Broadway.

► In her story, the word dudes *appears* five times.

43f Collective nouns

Generally, use a singular verb with a collective noun (*class, government, family, jury, committee, group, couple, team*) if you are referring to the group as a whole.

► My family *goes* on vacation every year.

Use a plural verb if you wish to emphasize differences among individuals or if members of the group are thought of as individuals.

► His family *are* mostly artists and musicians.

► The jury *are* from every walk of life.

If that usage seems awkward, revise the sentence.

- ▶ His close relatives *are mostly* artists and musicians.
- ▶ The members of the jury *are from every* walk of life.

Some collective nouns, such as *police*, *poor*, *elderly*, and *young*, always take plural verbs.

- ▶ The elderly *deserve* our respect.

43g Compound subjects

With and When a subject consists of two or more parts joined by *and*, treat the subject as plural and use a plural verb.

- ▶ His instructor and his advisor *want* him to change his major.

However, if the parts of the compound subject refer to a single person or thing, use a singular verb.

- ▶ The restaurant's chef and owner *makes* good fajitas.
- ▶ Fish and chips *is* a popular dish in England, but it is no longer served wrapped in newspaper.

With each or every When *each* or *every* is part of a compound subject, the verb is singular.

- ▶ Every toy and game *has* to be put away.
- ▶ Each plate and glass *looks* new.

With or or nor When the parts of a compound subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb agrees with the part nearer to it.

- ▶ Her sister or her parents *plan* to visit her next week.
- ▶ Neither her parents nor her sister *drives* a station wagon.

43h Indefinite pronouns and quantity words

Words (indefinite pronouns) that refer to nonspecific people or things and words and phrases that refer to quantity can be tricky. Some take

a singular verb; some take a plural verb; and some take a singular or a plural verb, depending on what they refer to. Some are used alone as a pronoun; others are used with a countable or uncountable noun in a noun phrase (for more on this, see 60a and 60b ESL). In addition, usage may differ in speech and writing.

Indefinite pronouns used with a singular verb

anybody	everyone	nothing
anyone	everything	somebody
anything	nobody	someone
everybody	no one	something

- ▶ Nobody *knows* the answer.
- ▶ Someone *has been sitting* on my chair.
- ▶ Everyone *agrees* on the author's intention
- ▶ Everything about the results *was* questioned in the review.

Quantity words referring to a countable noun and used with a singular verb

another	every
each	neither (see p. 335)
either	none (see p. 335)

- ▶ Another company *has bought* the land.
- ▶ Each of the chairs *costs* more than \$300.
- ▶ Of the two options, neither *was* acceptable.
- ▶ Every poem *contains* a stark image.

Quantity words referring to an uncountable noun and used with a singular verb

a(n) _____ amount (of)	(a) little
a great deal (of)	much (of)
less (see p. 335)	

- ▶ Less *has been accomplished* than we expected.
- ▶ A great deal of information *is being released*.

- ▶ Much of the machinery *needs* to be repaired.
- ▶ An enormous amount of equipment *was* needed to clean up the spilled oil.

Quantity words referring to a plural countable noun and used with a plural verb

both	many
a couple/number of	other/others
(a) few (see 64c ESL)	several
fewer (see p. 335)	

- ▶ She has written two novels. Both *receive* praise.
- ▶ Many *have* gained from the recent stock market rise.
- ▶ Few of his fans *are* buying his recent book.
- ▶ A number of articles *refer* to the same statistics.

Quantity words used with a plural verb to refer to a plural countable noun or with a singular verb to refer to an uncountable noun

all	half	most	some
any	more	no	

- ▶ All the students *look* healthy.
[The plural countable noun *students* takes a plural verb.]
- ▶ All the furniture *looks* old.
[The uncountable noun *furniture* takes a singular verb.]
- ▶ You gave me some information. *More is* necessary.
[*More* refers to the uncountable noun *information*.]
- ▶ You gave me some facts. *More are* needed.
[*More* refers to the countable noun *facts*.]
- ▶ Some of the jewelry *was* recovered.
[The uncountable noun *jewelry* takes a singular verb.]
- ▶ Some of the windows *were* open.
[The plural countable noun *windows* takes a plural verb.]

Note on none, neither, less, and fewer

None Some writers prefer to use a singular verb after *none* (*of*), because *none* means “not one”. *None of the contestants has smiled*. However, as *The American Heritage Dictionary* (4th ed.) points out about *none*, “The word has been used as both a singular and a plural noun from old English onward.” In formal academic writing, a singular or a plural verb is therefore technically acceptable: *None of the authorities has (or have) greater tolerance on this point than H. W. Fowler*. As with many issues of usage, however, readers form preferences. Check to see if your instructor prefers the literal singular usage.

Neither The pronoun *neither* is, like *none*, technically singular: *The partners have made a decision; neither wants to change the product*. In informal writing, however, you will see it used with a plural verb, especially when it is followed by an *of* phrase: *Neither of the novels reveal a polished style*. Ask your instructor about his or her preferences.

Less and Fewer Technically, *less* refers to a singular uncountable noun (*less spinach*), *fewer* to a plural countable noun (*fewer beans*). In journalism and advertising, and especially on supermarket signs (12 items or less), *less* is often used in place of *fewer*. In formal writing, however, use *fewer* to refer to a plural word: *In the last decade, fewer Olympic medalists have been using steroids*.

For agreement with *one of*, see page 331. For agreement with *one of* and *the only one of* followed by a relative clause, see 46c.

43i

Demonstrative pronouns and adjectives (*this, that, these, those*)

A demonstrative adjective must agree in number with the noun it modifies: *this solution, these solutions; that problem, those problems*.

SINGULAR	PLURAL
this	these
that	those

A demonstrative pronoun must agree in number with its antecedent (see 44d).

- ▶ The mayor is planning changes. These will be controversial.

INTENSIVE AND REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
First person	myself	ourselves
Second person	yourself	yourselves
Third person	himself herself itself	themselves

Forms such as *hissself*, *theirsself*, and *theirselves* occur in spoken dialects but are not Standard English.

441 Use *who* and *whom* and *whoever* and *whomever* correctly.

In all formal writing situations, distinguish between the subject and object forms of the pronouns used to form questions (interrogative pronouns) or to introduce a noun clause (37e).

SUBJECT	OBJECT
who	whom (or, informally, who)
whoever	whomever

In questions In a question, ask yourself whether the pronoun is the subject of its clause or the object of the verb. Test the pronoun's function by rephrasing the question as a statement, substituting a personal pronoun for *who* or *whom*.

- ▶ **Who wrote that enthusiastic letter?**
[*He* wrote that enthusiastic letter. Subject: use *who*.]
- ▶ **Whoever could have written it?**
[*She* could have written it. Subject: use *whoever*.]
- ▶ **Whom I were they describing?**
[*They* were describing *him*. Object: *whom* (formal), though *who* is common in such contexts both in speech and in writing.]

In noun clauses When introducing a dependent clause with a pronoun, determine whether to use the subject or object form by examining the pronoun's function in the clause. Ignore expressions such as *I think* or *I know* when they follow the pronoun; they have no effect on the form of the pronoun.

- ▶ **They want to know who runs the business.**
subject of clause

subject of clause (who runs the business)

▶ They want to know **who I think runs the business.**

object of to [the manager reports to him or her]

▶ They want to know **whom the manager reports to.**

subject of clause

▶ I will hire **whoever is qualified.**

object of recommends

▶ I will hire **whomever my boss recommends.**

For uses of *who* and *whom* in relative clauses, see 46a.

45 Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives describe, or modify, nouns or pronouns. They do not add -s or change form to reflect number or gender.

- ▶ Analysts acknowledge the **beneficial** effects of TV.
- ▶ He tried a **different** approach.
- ▶ The depiction of rural life is **accurate**.
- ▶ She keeps her desk **tidy**.

ESL Note Do not add -s to an adjective that modifies a plural noun.

- ▶ He tried three **different** approaches. ■

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs, as well as whole clauses.

- ▶ She settled down **comfortably**.
- ▶ The patient is demanding a **theoretically** impossible treatment.
- ▶ **Apparently**, the experiment was a success.

45a Use correct forms of adjectives and adverbs.

No single rule indicates the correct form of all adjectives and adverbs.

Adverb: adjective + -ly Many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to an adjective: *soft/softly; intelligent/intelligently*. Sometimes when *-ly* is added, a spelling change occurs: *easy/easily; terrible/terribly*.

Adjectives ending in -ic To form an adverb from an adjective ending in *-ic*, add *-ally* (*basic/basically; artistic/artistically*), except for *public*, whose adverb form is *publicly*.

Adjectives ending in -ly Some adjectives, such as *friendly, lovely, hungrily*, and *masterly*, already end in *-ly* and have no distinctive adverb form.

► She is a ^{adjective}friendly person. ► She spoke to me in a ^{adverbial phrase}friendly way.

Irregular adverb forms Certain adjectives do not add *-ly* to form an adverb:

ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
good	well
fast	fast
hard	hard

► He is a ^{adjective}good cook. ► He ^{adverb}cooks well.

► She is a ^{adjective}hard worker. ► She ^{adverb}works hard.

[*Hardly* is not the adverb form of *hard*. Rather, it means “barely,” “scarcely,” or “almost not at all”: *I could hardly breathe in that stuffy room*.]

Note: *Well* can also function as an adjective, meaning “healthy” or “satisfactory”: *A well baby smiles often. She feels well*.

45b Know when to use adjectives and adverbs.

In speech, adjectives (particularly *good, bad, and real*) are often used to modify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. This is nonstandard usage. Use an adverb to modify a verb or an adverb.

► They fixed the latch ^{well}good.

► I sing ^{really well}real-good.

► She speaks ^{clearly}very clear.

► They sing ^{badly}bad.

45c Use adjectives after linking verbs.

After linking verbs (*be, seem, appear, become*), use an adjective to modify the subject. (See 37c on subject complements.)

► That ^{adjective}steak is good.

► Her new coat ^{adjective}seems tight.

► She ^{adjective}feels bad because she sings so badly.

Some verbs (*appear, look, feel, smell, taste*) are sometimes used as linking verbs, sometimes as action verbs. If the modifier tells about the subject, use an adjective. If the modifier tells about the action of the verb, use an adverb.

Adjective She ^{adjective}looks confident in her new job.

Adverb She ^{adverb}looks confidently at all the assembled partners.

Adjective The waiter ^{adjective}feels bad.

The steak ^{adjective}smells bad.

Adverb The chef ^{adverb}smelled the lobster appreciatively.

45d Use correct forms for compound adjectives.

A compound adjective consists of two or more words used as a unit to describe a noun. Many compound adjectives contain the past participle *-ed* verb form: *flat-footed, barrel-chested, broad-shouldered, old-fashioned, well-dressed, left-handed*. Note the forms when a compound adjective is used before a noun: hyphens, past participle (*-ed*) forms where necessary, and no noun plural (*-s*) endings.

► They have a ^{compound adjective}five-year-old daughter. [Their daughter is five years old.]

► She gave me a ^{compound adjective}five-dollar bill. [She gave me five dollars.]

► He is a ^{compound adjective}left-handed pitcher. [He pitches with his left hand.]

For more on hyphenation, see 56b.

45e Know where to position adverbs.

An adverb can be placed in various positions in a sentence.

- ▶ *Enthusiastically*, she ate the sushi.
- ▶ She *enthusiastically* ate the sushi.
- ▶ She ate the sushi *enthusiastically*.

ESL Note Do not place an adverb between a verb and a short direct object (62b ESL).

- ▶ She ate enthusiastically the sushi. ■

Put adverbs that show frequency (*always, usually, frequently, often, sometimes, seldom, rarely, never*) in one of four positions:

1. At the beginning of a sentence
 - ▶ **Sometimes I just sit and daydream instead of writing.**
When *never, seldom, or rarely* occurs at the beginning of the sentence, word order is inverted (see also 34d and 37c).
 - ▶ *Never will I let that happen.*
2. Between the subject and the main verb
 - ▶ **They *always* arrive half an hour late.**
3. After a form of *be* or any auxiliary verb (such as *do, have, can, will, must*)
 - ▶ **They are *always* unpunctual.**
 - ▶ **She is *seldom* depressed.**
 - ▶ **He has *never* lost a game.**
4. In the final position
 - ▶ **He goes to the movies *frequently*.**

Note: Never place the adverb *never* in the final position.

45f Know the usual order of adjectives.

When two or more adjectives modify a noun, they usually occur in the order listed in the Key Points box. Commas separate coordinate adjectives of evaluation; their order can be reversed, and the word *and* can

be inserted between them (47g). No commas separate adjectives in the other categories listed in the box.

KEY POINTS**Order of Adjectives**

1. Determiner: articles (*a, an, the*), demonstrative adjectives (*this, that, these, those*), possessives (*its, our*), quantity words (*many, some*), numerals (*five, nineteen*)
2. Adjective of evaluation: *interesting, delicious, comfortable, inexpensive, heavy*
3. Adjective describing size: *little, big, huge*
4. Adjective describing shape: *round, square, long*
5. Adjective describing age: *new, young, old*
6. Adjective describing color: *white, red*
7. Adjective describing national origin: *Italian, European*
8. Adjective describing religious faith: *Catholic, Buddhist*
9. Adjective describing material: *oak, ivory, wooden*
10. Noun used as an adjective: *kitchen cabinet, writing desk*

- ▶ the lovely old oak writing desk
 - ▶ many little white ivory buttons
 - ▶ that beautiful long kitchen table
 - ▶ her efficient, hardworking assistant
- [Commas between coordinate adjectives of evaluation]

As a general rule, avoid long strings of adjectives. Two or three adjectives of evaluation, size, shape, age, color, national origin, faith, or material should be the limit.

45g Avoid double negatives.

Adverbs like *hardly, scarcely*, and *barely* are considered negatives, and the contraction *-n't* stands for the adverb *not*. Some languages and dialects allow the use of more than one negative to emphasize an idea,

but Standard English allows only one negative in a clause. Avoid double negatives.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE REVERSED We *don't* have *no* excuses.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE REVERSED We *don't* have *any* excuses. [or] We have *no* excuses.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE REVERSED She *didn't* say *nothing*.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE REVERSED She *didn't* say *anything*. [or] She said *nothing*.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE REVERSED They *can't* *hardly* pay the rent.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE REVERSED They *can* *hardly* pay the rent.

45h Know the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs.

The *comparative* and *superlative* forms of adjectives and adverbs are used for comparisons. Use the comparative form to compare two people, places, things, or ideas; use the superlative to compare more than two.

Regular forms Add the ending *-er* to form the comparative and *-est* to form the superlative of both short adjectives (those that have one syllable or those that have two syllables and end in *-y* or *-le*) and one-syllable adverbs. (Change *-y* to *-i* if *-y* is preceded by a consonant: *icy, icier, icest*.) Generally, a superlative form is preceded by *the* (*the shortest distance*).

COMPARATIVE (COMPARING TWO)		SUPERLATIVE (COMPARING MORE THAN TWO)	
short	shorter	shortest	
pretty	prettier	prettiest	
simple	simpler	simplest	
fast	faster	fastest	

With longer adjectives and with adverbs ending in *-ly*, use *more* (for the comparative) and *most* (for the superlative). Note that *less* (comparative) and *least* (superlative) are used with adjectives of any length (*less bright, least bright; less effective, least effective*).

COMPARATIVE		SUPERLATIVE	
intelligent	more intelligent	most intelligent	
carefully	more carefully	most carefully	
dangerous	less dangerous	least dangerous	

If you cannot decide whether to use *-er/-est* or *more/most*, consult a dictionary. If there is an *-er/-est* form, the dictionary will say so.

Note: Do not use the *-er* form with *more* or the *-est* form with *most*.

- ▶ The first poem was **more** better than the second.
- ▶ Boris is the **most** fittest person I know.

Irregular forms The following common adjectives and adverbs have irregular comparative and superlative forms:

	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
much / many	more	most
little	less	least
well	better	best
badly	worse	worst

Using *than* with comparative forms To compare two people, places, things, or ideas, use the comparative form and the word *than*. If you use a comparative form in your sentence, you need *than* to let readers know what you are comparing with what.

- ▶ This course of action is **more efficient** than the previous one.
- ▶ Comparative forms are also used without *than* in an idiomatic way.
 - ▶ The *harder* he tries, the *more satisfied* he feels.
 - ▶ The *more*, the *merrier*.

45i Avoid faulty or incomplete comparisons.

Make sure that you state clearly what items you are comparing. Some faulty comparisons can give readers the wrong idea. See 40h, 44a, 44b.

INCOMPLETE He likes the parrot better than his wife.

To avoid suggesting that he prefers the parrot to his wife, clarify the comparison by completing the second clause.

REVISED He likes the parrot better than his wife does.

advised writers to keep punctuation conventional: “The game of golf would lose a good deal if croquet mallets and billiard cues were allowed on the putting green. You ought to be able to show that you can do it a good deal better than anyone else with the regular tools before you have a license to bring in your own improvements” (Letter of 15 May 1925, *Selected Letters*, ed. Carlos Baker, 1981).

47 Commas

A comma separates parts of a sentence; a comma alone does not separate one sentence from another. When readers see a comma, they think, “These parts of the sentence are being separated for a reason.” When you can’t decide whether to use commas, follow this general guideline: “When in doubt, leave them out.” Readers find excessive use of commas more distracting than a few missing ones.

47a Two checklists—Commas: Yes, Commas: No

The two checklists provide general rules of thumb. Details and more examples of each rule follow in the rest of section 47.

KEY POINTS

Commas: Yes

1. Before a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, *for*, *yet*) to connect independent clauses, but optional if the clauses are short (47b)
 - ▶ He frowned, but she did not understand why he was worried.
2. After most introductory words, phrases, or clauses (47c)
 - ▶ After the noisy party, the neighbors complained.
3. Before and after extra (nonrestrictive) information included in a sentence (“extra commas with extra information”) (47d)
 - ▶ My father, a computer programmer, works late at night.

(Continued)

(Continued)

4. Around transitional expressions (47e)
 - ▶ The ending, however, is disappointing.
5. To separate three or more items in a series (47f)
 - ▶ They ordered eggs, bacon, and potatoes.
6. Between coordinate evaluative adjectives (45f and 47g)
 - ▶ We ate a delicious, well-prepared, and inexpensive meal.
7. After a verb that introduces a quotation (47h)
 - ▶ She gasped, “We haven’t a moment to lose!”

KEY POINTS

Commas: No (see 47i)

1. Not between subject and verb
 - ▶ The man in the baggy blue jeans is her English teacher.

However, use two commas to set off any extra information inserted between subject and verb (see 47d).
2. Not before part of a compound structure that is not an independent clause
 - ▶ She won the trophy and accepted it graciously.
3. Not after a coordinating conjunction connecting two independent clauses, but before it
 - ▶ The movie tried to be engaging, but it failed miserably.
4. Not between two independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction (use either a period and a capital letter or a semi-colon instead)
 - ▶ He won; she was delighted.
5. Not between an independent clause and a following dependent clause introduced by *after*, *before*, *because*, *if*, *since*, *unless*, *until*, or *when*, and neither before nor after the subordinating conjunction

(Continued)

(Continued)

- ▶ She will continue working for the city until she has saved enough for graduate school.
- 6. Not before a clause beginning with *that*.
- ▶ They warned us that the meeting would be difficult.
- 7. Not before and after essential, restrictive information.
- ▶ The player who scored the goal became a hero.
- 8. Not between a verb and its object or complement.
- ▶ The best gifts are food and clothes.
- 9. Not after *such as*.
- ▶ Popular fast food items, such as hamburgers and hot dogs, tend to be high in fat.

47b Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction to connect independent clauses.

When you connect independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, so, for, yet*), place a comma before the conjunction.

- ▶ The managers are efficient, but personnel turnover is high.
- ▶ The juggler juggled seven plates, and we all cheered.

If the independent clauses are short, you may omit the comma before the conjunction.

- ▶ He offered to help and he meant it.

47c Use a comma after most introductory words, phrases, and clauses.

The comma signals to readers that the word, phrase, or clause has conveyed an idea, and that the introductory part has ended. It says, in effect, "Now wait for the independent clause."

- ▶ If you blow out all the candles, your wishes will come true.

Often a comma is essential to prevent misreading.

MISREADING When active viruses can spread easily.
POSSIBLE

REVISED When active, viruses can spread easily.

The comma after the introductory material tells readers to expect the subject and verb of the independent clause.

47d Use commas to set off extra (nonrestrictive) phrases and clauses.

When a phrase or clause provides extra information that could be omitted without changing the meaning of the independent clause, the phrase or clause is said to be *nonrestrictive*. Use commas to set off a nonrestrictive element, to signal that the extra information it presents does not limit the meaning of the independent clause (37c). A phrase or clause that limits or restricts the meaning of the independent clause is said to be *restrictive*. Do not use commas with restrictive information.

NONRESTRICTIVE We'll attend, even though we'd rather not.

RESTRICTIVE We'll attend if we can.

Commas around appositive phrases Use commas to set off an appositive phrase (a phrase that renames or gives additional information about a prior noun or pronoun). If the phrase were omitted, readers might lose some interesting details but would still be able to understand the message.

▶ She loves her car, a red Toyota.

▶ His dog, a big Labrador retriever, is afraid of mice.

▶ Salinger's first novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, captures the language and thoughts of teenagers.

[The commas are used because the title provides supplementary information about the first novel, not information that identifies which novel the writer means. See also 47i, item 7.]

Commas around nonrestrictive participle and prepositional phrases Nonrestrictive participle and prepositional phrases add extra descriptive, but not essential, information.

- ▶ My boss, wearing a red tie and a green shirt, radiated the holiday spirit.
- ▶ The poet's study, in which she spent her final months, is now a shrine.

Commas around extra information in nonrestrictive relative clauses When you give nonessential information in a relative clause introduced by *who*, *whom*, or *which* (never *that*), set the clause off by commas.

- ▶ My boss, who wears bright colors, is a cheerful person.
[The independent clause "My boss is a cheerful person" does not lead readers to ask "Which boss?" The relative clause does not restrict the meaning of boss.]

▶ His recent paintings, which are hanging in our local restaurant, show dogs in various disguises. [The relative clause, introduced by *which*, merely provides the additional fact that his recent paintings are on display in the restaurant.]

Do not use commas to set off essential, restrictive information (46d and 47f).

- ▶ People, who wear bright colors, send an optimistic message.
[The relative clause, beginning with *who*, restricts "people" to a subgroup: not all people send an optimistic message; those who wear bright colors do.]

47e Use commas to set off transitional expressions.

Transitional expressions and conjunctive adverbs connect or weave together the ideas in your writing and act as signposts for readers. See 2d for a list of these expressions. Use commas to set off a transitional expression from the rest of the sentence.

- ▶ Most Labrador retrievers, however, are courageous.

Note: When you use a transitional expression such as *however*, *therefore*, *nevertheless*, *above all*, *of course*, or *in fact* at the beginning of an

independent clause, end the previous clause with a period or a semicolon. Then place a comma after the transitional expression.

- ▶ The party was a success. In fact, it was still going on at 2 a.m.

47f Use commas to separate three or more items in a series.

Readers see the commas between items in a series and think, "This is a list." If you said the sentence aloud, you would pause between items; in writing, you use commas to separate them.

- ▶ Searching through the drawer, the detective found a key, a stamp, three coins, and a photograph.

47g Use commas to separate coordinate evaluative adjectives.

Adjectives are *coordinate* when their order can be reversed and the word *and* can be inserted between them without any change in meaning. Coordinate adjectives (*beautiful*, *delicious*, *exciting*, *noisy*) make subjective and evaluative judgments rather than providing objectively verifiable information about, for instance, size, shape, color, or nationality (45f). Separate coordinate adjectives with commas.

- ▶ He hires people who are energetic, efficient, and polite.

Do not, however, put a comma between the final adjective of a series and the noun it modifies.

- ▶ Energetic, efficient, and polite salespeople are in demand.

No comma is necessary to separate adjectives that provide information about size, shape, age, color, national origin, religion, or material.

- ▶ Entering the little old stone house brought back memories of her childhood.

47h Use a comma to separate a direct quotation from the verb that introduces it.

The verb may come either before or after the quotation.

- ▶ When asked what she wanted to be later in life, she replied, "An Olympic swimmer."

- ▶ “I want to be an Olympic swimmer,” she announced confidently. [The comma is inside the quotation marks.]

471 When not to use commas: nine rules of thumb

1. Do not use a comma to separate a verb from its subject.

- ▶ The gifts she received from her colleagues made her realize her value to the company.
- ▶ Interviewing so many women in the United States helped the researcher understand the “American dream.”

Between a subject and verb, you might put two commas around inserted material, but never use just one comma.

- ▶ The engraved plaque, given to her by her colleagues on her last day of work, made her feel respected.

2. Do not use a comma within a compound structure when the second part of the compound is not an independent clause.

- ▶ Amy Tan has written novels and adapted them for the screen.
- ▶ Tan has written about her mother and the rest of her family.

3. Do not use a comma after a coordinating conjunction that connects two sentences. The comma goes before the conjunction, not after it.

- ▶ The Joy Luck Club is supposed to be good, but I missed it when it came to my local movie theater.

4. Do not use a comma to connect two independent clauses when no coordinating conjunction is present. Instead, end the first clause with a period and make the second clause a new sentence, or insert a semicolon between the clauses. Use a comma only if you connect the clauses with a coordinating conjunction. See 39 for ways to correct a comma splice, the error that results when two independent clauses are incorrectly connected with a comma.

- ▶ Amy Tan has written novels; they have been adapted for the screen.

5. Do not use a comma to separate an independent clause from a following dependent clause introduced by after, before, because, if, since, unless, until, or when.

- ▶ The test results were good because all the students had studied in groups.

6. Do not use a comma to separate a clause beginning with that from the rest of the sentence.

- ▶ The girl in Tan’s story tried to convey to her mother that she did not have to be a child prodigy.

Note: A comma can appear before a *that* clause when it is the second comma of a pair before and after extra information inserted as a non-restrictive phrase.

- ▶ He skates so fast, despite his size, that he will probably break the world record.

7. Do not use commas around a phrase or clause that provides essential, restrictive information.

- ▶ Alice Walker’s essay “Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self” discusses coping with a physical disfigurement.

[Walker has written more than one essay. The title restricts the noun *essay* to one specific essay.]

Similarly, a relative clause introduced by *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, or *that* is never set off by commas. The clause provides essential, identifying information (see 46d and 47d).

- ▶ The teachers praised the children who finished on time. [The teachers didn’t praise all the children; they praised only the ones who finished on time.]

8. Do not use a comma to separate a verb from its object or complement.

- ▶ The qualities required for the job are punctuality, efficiency, and the ability to work long hours.

9. Do not use a comma after such as.

- ▶ They bought kitchen supplies such as detergent, paper towels, and garbage bags.

471

Special uses of commas

With an absolute phrase Use a comma to set off a phrase that modifies the whole sentence (an absolute phrase).

- ▶ The audience looking on in amusement, the valedictorian blew kisses to all her favorite instructors.

With a date Use a comma to separate the day from the year in a date.

- ▶ On May 14, 1998, the legendary singer Frank Sinatra died.

[Do not use a comma before the year when the day precedes the month: 14 May 1998.]

With numbers Use a comma (never a period) to divide numbers into thousands.

- ▶ 1,200 ▶ 515,000 ▶ 34,000,000

No commas are necessary in years (2002), numbers in addresses (3501 East 10th Street), or page numbers (page 1008).

With titles Use commas around a person's title or degree.

- ▶ Stephen L. Carter, Ph.D., gave the commencement speech.

With the parts of an address

- ▶ Alice Walker was born in Eatonton, Georgia, in 1914.

However, do not use a comma before a ZIP code: Newton, MA 02159.

With a conversational tag or tag question

- ▶ Yes, Salinger's daughter, like others before her, has produced a memoir.

- ▶ She has not won a Pulitzer prize, has she?

With a direct address or salutation

- ▶ Whatever you build here, Mr. Trump, will cause controversy.

48 Apostrophes

Apostrophes indicate ownership or possession (*Fred's books, the government's plans*). They can also signal omitted letters (*who's, can't*).

48a

Two checklists—Apostrophe: Yes, Apostrophe: No

KEY POINTS

Apostrophe: Yes

1. Use *-s* for the possessive form of all nouns except plural nouns that end with *-s*: *the hero's misfortune, the actress's Academy Award*.
2. Use an apostrophe alone for the possessive form of plural nouns that end with *-s*: *actresses' lives, the heroes' misfortunes*.
3. Use an apostrophe to indicate the omission of letters in contracted forms such as *didn't* and *they're*.
4. Use *it's* only for "it is" or "it has": *It's a good idea; it's been a long time*. (The possessive form of the pronoun *it* is spelled with no apostrophe: *The house lost its roof*.)

KEY POINTS

Apostrophe: No

1. Generally, do not use an apostrophe to form the plurals of nouns. (See 48e for rare exceptions.)
2. Never use an apostrophe before an *-s* ending on a verb.
3. Do not write possessive pronouns (*hers, its, ours, yours, theirs*) with an apostrophe.
4. Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of names: *the Browns*.
5. Do not use an apostrophe to indicate possession by inanimate objects such as buildings and items of furniture; instead, use *of*: *the roof of the hotel, the back of the desk*.

48b Use -'s to signal possession.

As a general rule, to signal possession, use -'s with singular nouns, with indefinite pronouns, and with plural nouns that do not form the plural with -s.

the child's books	anybody's opinion
the children's toys	today's world
this month's budget	Mr. Jackson's voice
someone else's idea	their money's worth

Individual and joint ownership To indicate individual ownership, make each owner possessive.

▶ **Uppike's and Roth's recent works received glowing reviews.**

To show joint ownership, make only the last owner possessive: *Sam, Sue, and Pat's house*.

Compound nouns Add -'s to the last word in a compound noun.

▶ **my brother-in-law's car**

Singular nouns ending in -s When a singular noun ends in -s, add -'s as usual for the possessive.

▶ **Thomas's toys** ▶ **my boss's instructions**

However, when a singular noun ending in -s is a long word or ends with a *z* or *ez* sound, an apostrophe alone is sometimes used:

Charles's theories, Erasmus's rhetoric, Euripides's dramas.

48c Use only an apostrophe to signal possession in plural nouns already ending in -s.

Add only an apostrophe when a plural noun already ends in -s.

▶ **the students' suggestions** ▶ **my friends' ambitions**
[more than one student] [more than one friend]

Remember to include an apostrophe in comparisons with a noun understood (40h and 45i):

▶ **His views are different from other professors'.**
[... from other professors' views]**48d** Use an apostrophe in contractions.

In a contraction (*shouldn't, don't, haven't*), the apostrophe appears where letters have been omitted. To test whether an apostrophe is in the correct place, mentally replace the missing letters. The replacement test, however, will not help with the following:

wor^t will not

Note: Some readers object to contractions in formal academic writing because they view them as colloquial and informal. It is safer not to use contractions unless you know your readers' preferences.

can't	cannot	they'd	they had or they would
didn't	did not	they're	they are.
he's	he is or he has	it's	it is or it has
is	is, has, or does	let's	let us (Let's go.)
	(How's it taste?)		

Never place an apostrophe before the -s ending of a verb:

▶ **The author let's his characters take over.**

An apostrophe can also take the place of the first part of a year or decade.

▶ **the greed of the '80s** ▶ **the Spirit of '76**
[the 1980s] [the year 1776]

Note: Fixed forms spelled with an apostrophe, such as *o'clock* and the poetic *o'er*, are contractions ("of the clock," "over").

48e Use -'s for plurals in two special instances.

1. Use -'s for the plural form of letters of the alphabet. Italicize or underline only the letter, not the plural ending (52c).

▶ **Maria picked all the M's out of her alphabet soup.**▶ **Georges Perec's novel called *A Void* has no e's in it at all.**

2. Use -'s for the plural form of a word referred to as the word itself. Italicize or underline the word named as a word, but do not italicize or underline the -'s ending (52c).

▶ **You have too many but's in that sentence.**

MLA and APA prefer no apostrophe in the plural form of numbers, acronyms, and abbreviations (54f).

the 1900s CDs FAQs BAs

However, you will frequently see such plurals spelled with -'s. Just be consistent in your usage.

Never use an apostrophe to signal the plural of common nouns or personal names: *big bargains*, *the Jacksons*.

48f**Distinguish between *it's* and *its*.**

When deciding whether to use *its* or *it's*, think about meaning. *It's* is a contraction meaning "it is" or "it has." *Its* is the possessive form of the pronoun *it* and means "belonging to it." See also 44b.

► **It's a good idea.** ► **The committee took its time.**

49 Quotation Marks

Quotation marks indicate where a quotation begins and ends. The text between the quotation marks repeats the exact words that someone said, thought, or wrote. For omitting words, see 51g.

49a**Guidelines for using quotation marks****KEY POINTS****Quotation Marks: Basic Guidelines**

1. Quote exactly the words used by the original speaker or writer.

Quotation marks with closing quotation marks to the quotation ends and your ideas begin.

Use quotation marks to introduce and end a quotation, and use punctuation carefully in relation to the quotation.

Use quotation marks for short works in quotation marks.

49b**Punctuation introducing and ending a quotation**

After an introductory verb, use a comma followed by a capital letter to introduce a direct quotation.

► Calvin Trillin makes a good point when he says: "As far as I'm concerned, *whom* is a word that was invented to make everyone sound like a butler." —"Whom Says So?"

Use a colon after a complete sentence introducing a quotation, and begin the quotation with a capital letter.

► Woody Allen always tries to make us laugh even about serious issues like wealth and poverty: "Money is better than poverty, if only for financial reasons." —*Without Feathers*

When a quotation is integrated into the structure of your own sentence, use no special introductory punctuation other than the quotation marks.

► Phyllis Grosskurth comments that "anxiety over money was driving him over the brink." —*Byron*

Put periods and commas inside quotation marks, even if these punctuation marks do not appear in the original quotation.

► When Henry Rosovsky characterizes Bloom's ideas as "mind-boggling," he is not offering praise. —*The University*

In a documented paper, when you use parenthetical citations after a short quotation at the end of a sentence, put the period at the end of the citation, not within the quotation. See 49f for long quotations.

► Geoffrey Wolff observes that when his father died, there was nothing to indicate "that he had ever known another human being" (11). —*The Duke of Deception*

Put question marks and exclamation points inside the quotation marks if they are part of the original source, with no additional period. When your sentence is a statement, do not use a comma or period in addition to a question mark or exclamation point.

► She asked, "Where's my mama?"

52e Avoid italicizing or underlining for emphasis.

hair-raising.

▶ The climb was so scary.

Select a word that conveys the emphasis you want to express.

53 Capitalization

Always consult a dictionary if you are not sure whether to capitalize a word.

53a Capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives.

Begin the names of specific people, places, and things with a capital letter.

TYPES OF PROPER NOUNS
AND ADJECTIVES

EXAMPLES

Names of people Albert Einstein, Madonna, T. S. Eliot,
Bill GatesNames of nations, continents, planets, stars, and galaxies Hungary, Asia, Mercury, the North
Star, the Milky WayNames of mountains, rivers, and oceans Mount Everest, the Thames, the
Pacific OceanNames of public places and regions Golden Gate Park, the Great Plains,
the MidwestNames of streets, buildings, and monuments Rodeo Drive, the Empire State
Building, the Roosevelt Memorial

Names of cities, states, and provinces Toledo, Kansas, Nova Scotia

Days of the week and months Wednesday, March

Holidays Labor Day, the Fourth of July

Organizations and companies the Red Cross, Microsoft Corporation

Institutions (including colleges, departments, schools, government offices, and courts of law) University of Texas, Department of
English, School of Business,
Defense Department, Florida
Supreme CourtTYPES OF PROPER NOUNS
AND ADJECTIVES

EXAMPLES

Historical events, named periods, and documents the Civil War, the Renaissance, the
Roaring Twenties, the Declaration
of IndependenceReligions, deities, revered persons, and sacred texts Buddhism, Islam, Muslim, Baptist,
Jehovah, Mohammed, the Torah,
the Koran (Qur'an)Races, tribes, nations, nationalities, and languages the Navajo, Greece, Greek, Spain,
Spanish

Registered trademarks Kleenex, Apple, Bic, Nike, Xerox

Names of ships, planes, and spacecraft the USS *Kearsage*, the *Spirit of
St. Louis*, the *Challenger***Note:** Do not capitalize nouns naming general classes or types of people, places, things, or ideas: *government, jury, mall, prairie, utopia, traffic court, the twentieth century, goodness, reason*. For the use of capital letters in online writing, see 57c.**53b** Capitalize a title before a person's name.

▶ The reporter interviewed Senator Thompson.

▶ The residents cheered Grandma Jones.

Do not use a capital letter when a title is not attached to a person's name.

▶ Each state elects two senators.

▶ My grandmother is ninety years old.

When a title substitutes for the name of a known person, a capital letter is often used.

▶ Have you spoken with the Senator [senator] yet?

53c Capitalize major words in titles.In titles of published books, journals, magazines, essays, articles, films, poems, and songs, use a capital letter at the beginning of all words except articles (*the, a, an*), coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or, nor, so, for, yet*),

to in an infinitive (*to stop*), and prepositions unless they begin or end a title or subtitle.

- ▶ "A Matter of Identity"
- ▶ "Wrestling with the Angel: A Memoir"

53d

Guidelines for using a capital or lowercase letter after a colon or at the beginning of a quotation

Should a capital letter be used at the beginning of a clause after a colon? Usage varies. Usually a capital letter is used if the clause states a rule or principle (51b). Make your usage consistent.

Should a capital letter be used at the beginning of a quotation? Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence if it is capitalized in the original passage.

- ▶ Quindlen says, "This is a story about a name," and thus tells us the topic of her article.

Do not capitalize when you quote part of a sentence.

- ▶ When Quindlen says that she is writing "a story about a name," she is telling us the topic of her article.

54 Abbreviations

For abbreviations commonly used in online writing, see 57e.

54a Abbreviate titles used with people's names.

Use an abbreviation, followed by a period, for titles before or after names. The following abbreviated titles precede names: *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Prof.*, *Dr.*, *Gen.*, and *Sen.* (Note that *Ms.* is not an abbreviation, yet it is followed by a period.) The following abbreviated titles follow names: *Sr.*, *Jr.*, *PhD*, *MD*, *BA*, and *DDS*. Do not use a title both before and after a name: *Dr. Benjamin Spock* or *Benjamin Spock, MD*. Do not abbreviate a title if it is not attached to a specific name.

- ▶ He went to the *dr.* twice last week.

54b Abbreviate the names of familiar institutions, countries, tests, diplomas, individuals, and objects.

Use abbreviations of the names of well-known institutions (JCLA, YWCA, FBI, IBM), countries (USA or U.S.A.), tests and diplomas (SAT, GED), individuals (FDR), and objects (DVD). If you use a specialized abbreviation, first use the term in full followed by the abbreviation in parentheses; then use the abbreviation.

- ▶ The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required by many graduate schools. GRE preparation is therefore big business.

54c Abbreviate terms used with numbers.

Use the abbreviations such as BC, AD, a.m., p.m., \$, mph, rpm, mg, kg, and other units of measure only when they occur with specific numbers.

- ▶ 35 BC [meaning "before Christ," now often replaced with BCE, "before the Common Era"]
- ▶ AD 1776 [*anno domini*, "in the year of the Lord," now often replaced with CE, "Common Era," used after the date: 1776 CE]
- ▶ 2:00 a.m./p.m. [*ante* or *post meridiem*, Latin for "before or after midday"] Alternatives are A.M./P.M. or AM/PM. Be consistent.

But do not use these abbreviations and other units of measure when no number is attached to them.

- ▶ His family gave him a wallet full of \$ to spend on vacation.
- ▶ They arrived late in the p.m. *afternoon.*

54d Abbreviate common Latin terms.

In notes, parentheses, and source citations, use abbreviations for common Latin terms. In the body of your text, use the English meaning.

ABBREVIATION	LATIN	ENGLISH MEANING
etc.	et cetera	and so on
i.e.	id est	that is
e.g.	exempli gratia	for example
cf.	confer	compare

language are easy to find in advertising, business, politics, and some reporting. Do not equate formality with these roundabout expressions.

- ▶ The building's owners offered the inspectors many **financial** bribes incentives to overlook code violations.

AN INDIVIDUAL VOICE

The 5 C's of style will help you develop a style that will serve you well in college and the business world. The more you write, the more you will develop your own voice as you strive for variety, rhythm, and specific effects. The next three sections focus on sentence variety and on observing and learning from other writers. In the concluding section are some tips to help you review your drafts for style.

34 Sentence Variety

34a Sentence length

Readers appreciate variety, so aim for a mix of long and short sentences. If your editing program can print out your text in a series of single numbered sentences, you will easily be able to examine the length and structure of each sentence. Academic writing need not consist solely of long, heavyweight sentences. Short sentences interspersed among longer ones can have a dramatic effect.

This passage from a student memoir demonstrates the use of short sentences to great effect:

When I started high school and Afros became the rage, I immediately decided to get one. Now at that time, I had a head full of long, thick, kinky hair, which my mother had cultivated for years. When she said to me, "Cut it or perm it," she never for one minute believed I would do either. I cut it. She fainted.

—Denise Dejean, student

34b Statements, questions, commands, and exclamations

Declarative sentences make statements, *interrogative* sentences ask questions, *imperative* sentences give commands, and *exclamatory* sen-

tences express surprise or some other strong emotion. Most of the sentences in your college writing will be declarative, though an occasional question is useful to draw readers into thinking about your topic. An occasional exclamatory sentence can be powerful, too, although exclamation points rarely appear in academic writing.

When you are writing an argument and want to persuade readers to act or to agree with you, you may feel tempted to write commands:

- ▶ We need to help the homeless. Contribute money, lobby your local politicians, and volunteer your time. Remember that homelessness is often the result of an accident.

Your argument will be more persuasive, however, if you make your points without directly addressing your readers and telling them what to do.

34c Types of sentences

Vary the structure of your sentences throughout any piece of writing. Aim for a mix of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

A *simple sentence* contains one independent clause.

- ▶ Kara raised her hand.

A *compound sentence* contains two or more independent clauses connected with one or more coordinating conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, *for*, *yet*), or with a semicolon alone, or with a semicolon and a transitional expression (2d).

- ▶ independent clause independent clause
- ▶ She raised her hand, and the whole class was surprised.
- ▶ independent clause independent clause
- ▶ She raised her hand, but nobody else responded.
- ▶ independent clause independent clause
- ▶ She raised her hand; the whole class was surprised.
- ▶ independent clause independent clause
- ▶ She raised her hand; as a result, the whole class was surprised.

A *complex sentence* contains an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses (37e).

- ▶ dependent clause independent clause
- ▶ When she raised her hand, the whole class was surprised.
- ▶ independent clause dependent clause
- ▶ The whole class was surprised when she raised her hand.

