

Correcting the 15 Common Errors Paragraph One

The following responds to the Practice activity presented on pages 362-63 of *Acting on Words*.

The common errors (CEs) are covered in *Acting on Words*, pages 550-565. Just look for the CE number referred to (1-15) and read the discussion that follows it. If you have difficulty with any terms or explanations in the discussion, you may need some supplementary explanation. Parts of speech and certain functions (subject, clause, restrictive, etc.) are defined under “Forms,” pages 518-531. More help with punctuation is covered on pages 542-548. Depending on how much difficulty you may have with the common error discussions on pages 550-565, you may also want to consult “Preparing to Solve the 15 Common Errors” at the text website under Handbook.

Paragraph One Revised

The Sopranos has all the features of a Shakespearian history play, as defined by Norrie Epstein: battlefield heroics, familial relationships, feisty characters, power politics and covert scheming (151). Like Prince Harry overcoming Hotspur in *Henry IV, Part 2*, Tony prevails over an attempted assassination (episode 12), as does Chris (episode 21). In fact, Chris almost dies, so bravery is much on display. Shakespeare’s use of domestic scenes is paralleled in *The Sopranos* by similar scenes of family relationships involving Tony, Carmela, Meadow, Anthony Junior, and various other members of the extended crime “family.” Feisty Shakespearean characters such as Hotspur, Falstaff, and Mistress Quickly find their modern counterparts in *Sopranos* regulars like Chris, Uncle Junior, and Janice. In particular, Tony resembles Henry IV in that both conceal private anguish beneath a mask of political action. On the matter of power politics, Shakespeare’s histories begin with the question of who will succeed to power, who will win the bitter feud between the houses of Lancaster and York. Similarly, *The Sopranos* begins with the death of the local crime boss, Jackie Aprile, Sr., a consequential power vacuum, and

problems of how to gain control according to the old code of honour, which has kept its meaning only for Tony. Even the playfulness of Shakespeare's language finds a parallel in *The Sopranos*' many visual and linguistic puns and double entendres, such as the name of the informant character Pussy (executed at the end of season two). Uniting all of these similarities is the strong appeal that both the histories and *The Sopranos* have for their audiences: we envy the rich and the powerful, we experience the vicarious thrill of sin and danger, and we recognize in the ruthless main characters the same moral compromises that govern our own lives.

Work Cited

Epstein, Norrie. *Friendly Shakespeare: A Thoroughly Painless Guide to the Best of the Bard*. Penguin: New York, 1993.

Paragraph One Unrevised

With Notations Identifying the Errors

*The Soprano's*¹ have² all the features of a Shakespearian history play, as defined by Norrie Epstein;³ battlefield heroics, familial relationships, feisty characters, power politics and covert scheming (151). Like Prince Harry overcoming Hotspur in Henry IV, Part 2⁴ Tony prevailed⁵ over an attempted assassination (episode 12),⁶ so did Chris (episode 21). This⁷ is where Chris almost died,⁸ so bravery was⁹ much on display.

¹ CE 13

² CE 3. One show (singular subject) *has*.

³ CE 9.

⁴ Titles of plays are underlined or placed in italics. Also CE 8 A.

⁵ CE 10. Use the present tense (literary present) when discussing ideas and episodes in a text. Treat the text as taking form and existing in the present.

⁶ CE 2.

⁷ CE 4. What exactly does "this" stand for?

⁸ CE 10.

Shakespeares¹⁰ use of domestic scenes are¹¹ paralleled in *The Sopranos* by similar scenes of family relationships involving Tony, Carmela, Meadow, Anthony Junior, and various other members of the extended crime “family.” Feisty Shakespearean characters such as Hotspur, Falstaff, and Mistress Quickly find their modern counterparts in *Sopranos* regulars like Chris, Uncle Junior, and Janice. Each has their¹² own feisty manner. In particular, Tony resembled¹³ Henry IV in their concealing of private anguish beneath a mask of political action.¹⁴ On the matter of power politics, Shakespeare’s histories began¹⁵ with the question of whom¹⁶ will succeed to power, and would there be¹⁷ an answer to the bitter feud which occurred between¹⁸ the houses of Lancaster and York. Similarly, *The Sopranos* begins with the death of the local crime boss, Jackie Aprile, Sr., a consequential power vacuum, and problems of how to gain control according to the old code of honour¹⁹ which only²⁰ has kept its meaning for Tony. Comparing Shakespeares’²¹ language to language in *The Sopranos*’s²², a parallel²³ exists in many visual and linguistic puns and double entendres such as the name of the informant character Pussy (executed at the end of season two). This²⁴ is little observed, it seems. An essay on the topic, however, is upcoming.²⁵ Uniting all of these similarities is the strong appeal that both the histories and *The Sopranos* has²⁶ for their audiences,²⁷ we envy the rich and the powerful,

⁹ CE 10.

¹⁰ CE 13. Shakespeare’s.

¹¹ CE 3. His use (singular) *is*.

¹² CE 4. Each (singular) has *his or her*. The editor, however, decided that this sentence is basically redundant and cut it.

¹³ CE 10.

¹⁴ The editor smoothed out this sentence.

¹⁵ CE 10

¹⁶ CE 7. ... of who will...

¹⁷ CE 12. The editor has smoothed this sentence in a parallel structure.

¹⁸ This would be CE 10, but the editor realized that words here could be cut.

¹⁹ CE 8 D and CE 15. Comma before a qualifying (non-restrictive) clause.

²⁰ CE 8 6.

²¹ CE 13. Shakespeare’s.

²² CE 13. *Sopranos*.

²³ CE 5. It sounds like the parallel is doing the comparing.

²⁴ CE4. The editor, however, decided to cut the entire sentence as trying to add too much incidental information, which then requires detailed support.

²⁵ The editor cut this claim because it is extremely vague. Sources need to be specifically cited.

²⁶ CE3. They (plural subject) *have*.

²⁷ CE 2.

the vicarious thrill of sin and danger is experienced,²⁸ in the ruthless main characters the same moral compromise which governs our own lives are²⁹ recognized. A shared worldview despite the different time periods.³⁰

Work Cited

Epstein, Norrie. *Friendly Shakespeare: A Thoroughly Painless Guide to the Best of the Bard*. Penguin: New York, 1993.

²⁸ CE 12 and CE 14. The sentence presents a list of three independent clauses, the second two switching form to passive voice. In addition, there should be an “and” before the final item (in this case an independent clause) in the list.

²⁹ CE3. ... *compromise is....* or *compromises are...*

³⁰ CE 1.