



Grammar Proficiency Study Packet

What does this packet cover?

This study packet is designed for students who want to improve their scores on the NHC Grammar Proficiency Exam or to improve their grammar skills. These topics are covered:

Sentence Patterns (simple, compound, complex)
Sentence Structure (fragments, run-ons, comma splices)
Semicolons and Colons
Subject-Verb Agreement
Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement
Parallel Structure
Misplaced Modifiers
Shifts in Tense, Voice, Mood, Person and Number
Commas
Apostrophes
Quotation Marks
Question Marks
Capital Letters

Each topic begins with a short explanation followed by a practice exercise. Study the explanations first, and then do the exercises. You can check your work with the answer key in the Writing Center.

How can I get more help?

If you are enrolled in an English class, begin by asking your teacher how much grammar will be reviewed in class. Then, study your own textbook, and take advantage of any class discussions on proofing and editing.

The NHC Writing Center offers more support: free tutors, handouts and answer keys, a practice version of the Grammar Proficiency Exam (hardcopy or on-line), and computer software. See a member of the Writing Center staff for help in finding the materials you need.

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Conjunctions

Compound Sentences

Option 1 Independent Clause

, for
, and
, nor
, but
, or
, yet
, so

[FANBOYS]

Independent Clause

Option 2 Independent Clause

;

Independent Clause

Option 3 Independent Clause

; consequently,
; furthermore,
; however,
; indeed,
; in fact,
; moreover,
; nevertheless,
; then,
; therefore,

Independent Clause

Complex Sentences

Option 4 Independent Clause

after
although
as (as if)
because
before
if
since
unless
until
when(ever)
while

Dependent Clause

Option 5 After
Although
As (as if)
Because
Before
If
Since
Unless
Until
When(ever)
While

Dependent Clause,

Independent Clause



Building Sentence Patterns

1. **Simple Sentence-** contains only one independent clause:

Simple Sentence		
Subject	&	Predicate
Jane and Bob		went to dinner

2. **Compound Sentence-** joins two or more independent clauses (also called simple sentences or complex ideas), but no dependent clauses. Compound sentences join ideas of equal importance.

Simple Sentence & Simple Sentence

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Option 1 | Jane and Bob
went to dinner | , and | they went to a movie afterwards. |
| Option 2 | Jane and Bob
went to dinner | ; | they went to a movie afterwards. |
| Option 3 | Jane and Bob
went to dinner | ; afterwards, | they went to a movie. |

3. **Complex Sentence-** joins one or more dependent clauses (also called subordinate or embedded clauses) to the independent clause. Complex sentences are useful when your writing includes some ideas that are more important than others. The independent clause contains the main idea, and the dependent clauses convey minor or subordinate ideas.

Simple Sentence Dependent Clause

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| Option 4 | Bob drove
Jane home | when the movie was over. |
| Option 5 | The one | When the movie was over, Bob drove Jane home.
who drove Jane home was Bob. |



Sentence Fragments and Run-on Sentences

A sentence is a group of words that names something and makes a statement about what is named.

A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence because it lacks a subject, lacks a verb, or is a dependent clause. Fragments usually begin with a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun. When sentences begin with subordinate conjunctions or relative pronouns, they must be joined to a main clause.

Fragments

Although he wanted to go to the meeting.
Whoever goes to the meeting.

Complete sentences

Although he wanted to go to the meeting, his doctor advised him to stay home.
Whoever goes to the meeting should bring back handouts for the rest of the group.

Subordinate Conjunctions: after, although, as, as if, as though, because, before, except, if, since, though, unless, until, when, whereas

Relative Pronouns: that, what, whatever, which, who, whoever, whom, whose

Run-on sentences usually occur as comma splices or fused sentences. A fused sentence occurs when independent clauses are joined with no punctuation. A comma splice occurs when only a comma joins two independent clauses.

An independent clause is a sentence. It can stand alone and make sense. A dependent clause is a fragment. It cannot stand alone and make sense.

Sentence Fragment Practice

Place a (✓) in the left hand column if the sentence is actually a fragment.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1. While they were gone to the grocery store. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2. Going to Florida and to Jamaica for Spring Break. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3. Before the children have to go to bed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. They are beautiful. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Three of us went on the retreat. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 6. Because she had gone to her friend's house late at night without asking for permission. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. She won't eat them. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. I don't know when she's coming back. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 9. Since they left early in the morning. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Mike doesn't know. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Don't go into that room alone. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 12. After you return from the store. |



- ☒ 13. Because education is important.
- ☐ 14. We are leaving at 3:00.
- ☒ 15. Since she was dressed in white.
- ☒ 16. While he is planning to be in Europe for the summer.
- ☐ 17. There is nobody to help her.
- ☐ 18. They are running four miles every morning.
- ☒ 19. The importance of eating a healthy diet.
- ☒ 20. When they arrive tomorrow.

Run-on Sentence Practice

Correct the following run-on sentences by dividing them into two complete sentences. Add a period to the end of the first sentence, and capitalize the first letter in the second sentence.

She wanted to go to the movie she called to find out what time the show started.

Corrected: She wanted to go to the movie. She called to find out what time the show started.

1. The red car is in the parking lot. I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class. All the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once. She didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes. I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant. He called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around. We had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early. You don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting. She made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation. They didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing. They gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony. Too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could. Everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me. I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade. She was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot. He won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go. She had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment. He couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go. I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day. Before dawn was just too early.



Run-on Sentence Practice

Correct the following run-on sentences by using a semicolon. Semicolons may be used to join independent clauses not joined by coordinating conjunctions.

She wanted to go to the movie she called to find out what time the show started.

Corrected: She wanted to go to the movie; she called to find out what time the show started.

1. The red car is in the parking lot; I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class; all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once; she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes; I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant; he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around; we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early; you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting; she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation; they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing; they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony; too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could; everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me; I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade; she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep; the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot; he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go; she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment; he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go; I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day; before dawn was just too early.



Run-on Sentence Practice

Correct the following run on sentences by using an appropriate coordinating conjunction and a comma. The coordinating conjunctions are *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so* (FANBOYS).

She wanted to go to the movie she called to find out what time the show started.

Corrected: She wanted to go to the movie, so she called to find out what time the show started.

1. The red car is in the parking lot, **but** I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class, **so** all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once, **but** she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes, **but** I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant, **so** he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around, **so** we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early, **so** you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting, **so** she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation, **and** they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing, **so** they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony, **but** too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could, **so** everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me, **but** I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade, **for** she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep, **and** the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot, **and** he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go, **but** she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment, **but** he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go, **so** I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day, **but** before dawn was just too early.



Sentence Fragments and Run-on Sentence Practice

Select the sentence from each group that is a sentence fragment or a run-on sentence.

1. A. **Probably two to three hours, depending on how hard the task is.**
B. The test seemed impossible, but I managed to make an A.
C. We went shopping this past weekend.
D. He wanted the blue one.
2. A. **When you use the conjunctions and, for, nor, but, or, for, or, yet, so.**
B. They promise to be there in time for the reception, but I expect they will be late.
C. There were four in our group.
D. Let's meet at Lucy's house, and remember to bring the soft drinks and popcorn.
3. A. Mr. Smith, along with all of his students, took his place in the auditorium.
B. The girls arrived late and left early; they only intended to make a brief appearance.
C. **It is important to spend time studying, however, rest and recreation are also important.**
D. The prosecution presented its case so well that it would be a surprise for the jury to return a verdict of not guilty.
4. A. This position requires speaking, writing, and supervising skills.
B. The conversation took place in her office, which was cluttered with papers and books.
C. The activity is brisk in the living room and in the kitchen while people are searching for a place to sit.
D. **This is not what I requested the color is too dark, and it's the wrong size.**
5. A. After searching through a loose-leaf binder of old homework assignments, he finally found the notes he was searching for, and he began his intense study marathon.
B. The student entered the professor's office cautiously, and he wondered if the professor--especially someone so distinguished as to be the department head--could have any understanding of the stress students face.
C. **Then she would be calm.**
D. She looked at the cat again, who had been watching her, and the bird, which was chirping outside the window.
6. A. He took the elevator up to the ninth floor; he was just in time for his appointment.
B. She waited a minute before dialing the phone, still wondering if she was making the right decision.
C. The child's mother looked at him disapprovingly; he was wet, and his new clothes were covered in mud.
D. **Because there was a policy that only students of the school could check out books from the library.**



7. A. Jane watched for a moment, and then went back to work.
B. The teacher, having prepared the class for their exam.
C. She stood up and put on her jacket and hat.
D. Mary, sitting on the edge of her chair, watched to see the champion baton twirler's fire and knife performance.
8. A. He looked old; his hair and beard were gray.
B. Because the only one in the room besides her was an old gentleman with a fragile hand placed on each knee, whose eyes were closed as if he were asleep or dead or meditating.
C. Next to the young girl was the boy, still sleeping in the chair, and next to him was an older man, constantly watching the clock.
D. I like the way Judge Smith runs the courtroom; she has no trouble keeping order.
9. A. His teaching position paid well; nevertheless, his graduate school tuition was a great financial strain.
B. Please don't ask me to read I didn't bring my glasses.
C. We sang until midnight.
D. She had the correct answer.
10. A. Not wanting to appear overly ambitious.
B. Learning to play a musical instrument takes a great deal of time and patience.
C. All of the books on the list appealed to him, but he knew he would only have time to read two during the trip.
D. This is an important presentation for anyone interested in the field.



Colons and Semicolons

The Semicolon

Use semicolons to separate independent clauses not joined by coordinating conjunctions.

They went to the grocery store; Suzi bought milk and bread.

This is my favorite restaurant; I'm glad we came here.

He always takes the extra shift; this time he was out of town.

Use semicolons between long or internally punctuated independent clauses even when they are joined by coordinating conjunctions.

The students, who were first semester high school freshman, were not familiar with the new environment; but now they are completely comfortable.

We had already ordered the cake, arranged the entertainment, and selected the decorations; so there wasn't much left to be done by John, Joan, or Chris.

I am eager, as you can imagine, to move forward with the plan; but the funding, which is being reduced, has not been approved.

Use semicolons to separate independent clauses joined by conjunctive adverbs or transitional expressions.

He trained for months for the competition; however, he broke his wrist the week before the main event.

The substitute speaker arrived at the last minute; thus the meeting was saved from being a complete failure.

He did not register before the deadline; consequently, he was not eligible to participate.

Use semicolons to separate phrases or clauses in a series if they are long or contain commas.

On that unlucky day, Jane couldn't find her homework, lost her shoes, and slipped on the sidewalk; John broke his arm, ripped his shirt, and his wallet was stolen; and Bob was late for work, didn't remember to wear his tie, and scratched his glasses.

We visited Houston, Texas; St. Petersburg, Florida; and Boston, Massachusetts.

Jane got flowers, a bracelet, and a ring from her aunt; shoes, a purse, and earrings from her parents; and a briefcase, a pen, and a watch from her godparents.

Semicolon Usage Practice

Place a semicolon where needed in the following sentences.

1. Mike wanted to go to the party; Susan wanted to stay home.
2. I love to read current fiction; Susan Howatch is my favorite author.
3. Procrastination is my worst habit; consequently, I often fail to do my best.
4. We have been to the Hard Rock Café locations in Atlanta, Georgia; Houston, Texas; and Chicago, Illinois.
5. My aunt, who doesn't like spicy foods, will not eat peppers; but she grows them in the garden for everyone else to enjoy.



6. They said they didn't see him there; however, he had signed the registration log.
7. Jane and Mark are in the same English class; they each have to write a research paper.
8. You must remember to water the plants; they are starting to wilt.
9. Students are usually given a syllabus on the first day of class; then there is often a reading assignment to complete before the second class meeting.
10. The pilots knew something was wrong; however, they didn't want to alarm the passengers.
11. The robber, who had been caught, surrendered to the police; he was placed under arrest.
12. You should review all of the material; furthermore, we are having a quiz next week.
13. The puppy, who was adopted a week ago, needed much attention; so the family played with him each morning, after lunch, and each evening.
14. You should review the vocabulary from chapters 1, 2, and 3; answer the questions from sections A, B, and C from each chapter; and study charts 4, 5, and 6 on your handout.
15. We wanted to take her shopping; instead, she wanted to stay home and sleep.

The Colon

Use a colon to introduce a series following a complete sentence.

You have to take three science classes: biology, chemistry, and anatomy.

We had three choices: Astroworld, the museum, or a basketball game.

The United States flag has three colors: red, white, and blue.

Use a colon before anything that defines, renames, explains, or illustrates the preceding independent clause.

She left no doubt about her policy: she does not accept late work except in emergencies.

There was much confusion at registration: people didn't know which forms to complete and there were no signs to identify the lines.

His favorite teacher was his math instructor: the one who tutored him every day during study hall.

Use a colon to introduce a quotation of more than four lines or when a short quotation is introduced with a complete independent clause.

With hesitation, she gave her answer: "Only if you promise to return."

The introduction of "The Tell-Tale Heart," a short story by Edgar Allan Poe, reveals a great deal about the narrator's frame of mind:

True!-nervous-very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses-not destroyed-not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! And observe how healthily-how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

Use a colon at the end of a formal salutation.

Dear Dr. Jones:

Dear Professor Smith:

To Whom it May Concern:



Colon Usage Practice

Place a colon where needed in the following sentences.

1. Finally, I remembered the stages of cell division: interphase, prophase, metaphase, anaphase, telophase.
2. She made her response boldly: "I don't want to go."
3. Her decision was made: she would take algebra.
4. Dear Judge Baker:
5. He couldn't resist the temptation: he ate the piece of cake.
6. The captain has written letters of recommendation for the following people: Jane Smith, John Brown, and Bill Jones.
7. He proclaimed his choice boldly: "I want the blue one."
8. John teaches three classes: history, government, and sociology.
9. She particularly admired her aunt: the one she lived with while in high school.
10. The meeting was a disaster: the agenda was not prepared and the discussion was unfocused.



Agreement of Subject and Verb

Verbs can change form in tense, person, and number. The subject and verb of every clause (independent or dependent), however, must agree in person and number. Once you identify the subject and the verb, you can then determine such agreement of the subject and the verb.

There are three persons:

First person- the speaker

Second person-the person spoken to

Third person- the person spoken about

There are two numbers:

Singular- denoting one person or thing

Plural- denoting more than one person or thing

Nouns ending in *s* are usually plural.

Verbs ending in *s* are singular.

Singular subjects should be paired with singular verbs and plural subjects should be paired with plural verbs.

she walks

the book is

they want

Bill, John, and Jane go

1. Compound Subjects

Compound subjects joined by *and* normally require a plural verb:

Hard work and persistence are required in all rewarding accomplishments.

Where are the pens and paper?

Subjects which include at least two nouns or pronouns connected by *and* should be paired with plural verbs.

the manager and the employees are

the cats and the dog run

the man and the woman are

2. Subjects Joined by *Or* or *Nor*

When two or more subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the subject part closest to the verb. This also applies to *either/or* and *neither/nor*.

the professor or her students write

the students or their professor writes

the boy or the girl walks



3. Intervening Expressions

Modifying phrases or clauses that come between the subject and the verb do not change the number of the verb. The number of the verb is determined entirely by the number of the subject:

The assignment, which they submitted to their professor, was incomplete. [Assignment is the subject of the verb *was*].

The new computer classroom, with its many work stations and its sophisticated technology, fills [not fill] a long-felt need. [*Computer classroom* is the subject of the verb *fills*; the phrase *with its many work stations...* has nothing to do with the verb.]

4. Verb Preceding the Subject

It is possible for a verb to come before a subject in a sentence. The rules of agreement between the subject and the verb remain the same despite the change in order.

There is in many cities a desire to reduce traffic and pollution. [*Desire* is the subject of the verb *is*.]

There are a stapler, two pens, four books, and a writing tablet on the desk. [*Stapler, pens, books* and *writing tablet* are the subjects of the verb *are*.]

Where are *Joan and her daughters* going? [*Joan and her daughters* are subjects of the verb *are going*.]

5. Indefinite Pronouns

The indefinite pronouns or adjectives *either*, *neither*, and *each*, as well as compounds such as *everybody*, *anybody*, *everyone*, and *anyone* are always singular. *None* may be singular or plural. The plural usage is more common.

Each of the cars has its insurance proof in the glove compartment.

Everyone at the meeting was upset over the policies announced.

Every employee, supervisor, and executive reveals the operation of a model company.

Is either of you ready for lunch?

None of the employees have brought their children to the company dinner.

None of the students is interested in the research project.

None--no, not one--is planning to attend the retreat.



6. Subjects Plural in Form

Singular verbs are usually used with nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning.

The following nouns are usually singular in meaning: *news, economics, ethics, physics, mathematics, gallows, mumps, measles, shambles, whereabouts.*

a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is...

physics is a difficult course...

statistics is...

politics is...

athletics seems...

Nouns such as *gymnastics, tactics, trousers, scissors, athletics, tidings, acoustics, riches, and barracks* are usually treated as plural.

His tactics are sneaky.

The scissors are on the table.

The trousers are hanging in the closet.

Plural nouns denoting a mass, a quantity, or a number require a singular verb when the subject is regarded as a unit.

Five dollars is too much for her to pay.

Fifty bushels was all the bin would hold.

Though usage is mixed, phrases involving addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division of numbers usually take the singular form.

Two plus two is four.

Two times three is six.

Twelve divided by six is two.

In expressions like *part of the apple, some of the pie, all of the money, the number of part, some, and all* is determined by the number of the noun in the prepositional phrase.

Some of the pie has been eaten.

Some of the pies have been eaten.

7. The subject of some form of *To Be*

When one noun precedes and another follows some form of the verb *to be*, the first noun is the subject, and the verb agrees with it and not with the complement even if the complement is different in number.

The only food remaining is mashed potatoes.

Mashed potatoes are the only food remaining.

[In the first sentence, *food* is the subject; in the second, *mashed potatoes*.]



8. Relative Pronoun as Subject

When a relative pronoun (*who*, *which*, or *that*) is used as the subject of a clause, the number and person of the verb are determined by the antecedent of the pronoun, the word to which the pronoun refers.

This is the professor who is to be hired. [The antecedent of *who* is the singular noun *professor*; therefore, *who* is singular.]

These are the employees who are to be working tomorrow. [The antecedent of *who* is the plural noun *employees*.]

Should I, who am not a student at the school, be allowed to take the class? [*Who* refers to *I*; *I* is first person, singular number.]

She is one of those tough professors who are always expecting the best from students. [The antecedent of *who* is *professors*.]

If sentences such as the last one give you trouble, try beginning the sentence with the "of" phrase, and you will readily see that the antecedent of *who* is persons and not one.

Of those tough professors who are always expecting the best from students, she is one.

9. Collective Nouns

Some nouns are singular in form but plural in meaning. They are called collective nouns and include such words as *team*, *class*, *committee*, *crowd*, and *crew*. These nouns may take either a singular or plural verb; if you are thinking of the group as a unit, use a singular verb; if you are thinking of the individual members of the group, use a plural verb.

When referring to a group as a single unit, a singular verb is used.

The public is...

The family is...

The class is demanding...

When referring to a group's members as individuals, a plural verb is used.

The committee fight among themselves.

The student body are talking with each other.

The class are writing.

10. Nouns with Foreign Plurals

Some nouns retain the plural forms peculiar to the languages from which they have been borrowed: *alumni*, *media*, *crisis*. Still other nouns occur with either their original plural forms or plural forms typical of English: *aquaria* or *aquariums*, *criteria* or *criteria*s. If you are in doubt as to the correct or preferred plural form of a noun, consult a good dictionary.

Note: Be careful not to use a plural form when you refer to a singular idea. For instance:

He is an alumnus [not *alumni*] of this school.



Subject Verb Agreement Practice

Mark the appropriate verb choice for each of the following sentences.

1. The noisy students (**have**, has) to leave after two warnings.
2. She is the only one of the students who (have, **has**) failed the test.
3. The crying baby (irritate, **irritates**) them.
4. The longest of the presentations (**is**, are) the next group.
5. The students and their teacher (is, **are**) traveling to the competition.
6. Either one of the choices (**is**, are) going to disrupt the schedule.
7. This is the stereo system that (have, **has**) been purchased most often in our store.
8. Nobody (dare, **dares**) to challenge the teacher when she is wrong.
9. The players or their coach (**is**, are) holding a press conference.
10. Neither of the students (**has**, have) been to Europe.
11. The problems (was, **were**) due to a misunderstanding.
12. Which (is, **are**) more interesting, the red jackets or the blue sweaters?
13. (**Has**, Have) the manager or the assistant manager approached you?
14. Joan, as well as my sister, (**is**, are) in college now.
15. Several of the students (has, **have**) left.
16. Both of the children (has, **have**) red notebooks.
17. One of the best known love stories (**is**, are) *Romeo and Juliet*.
18. Mathematics (**is**, are) very difficult for many students to master.
19. She is one of the girls who (**have**, has) long hair.
20. She or her sisters (is, **are**) going.

Subject Verb Agreement Practice

Mark the appropriate verb choice for each of the following sentences.

1. Each of the exercises (take, **takes**) about twenty minutes to complete.
2. The ladies and the child (is, **are**) planning to have pizza for lunch.
3. The teacher, along with her students, (**is**, are) determined to have a good year.
4. Please tell me when John and Mary (**go**, goes) to the store.
5. The class (watch, **watches**) a movie every Friday night.
6. The number of issues (seem, **seems**) to be increasing.
7. The husband and his wife (**drive**, drives) a convertible.
8. Hardly anyone (speak, **speaks**) to her.
9. He or his sister (want, **wants**) to visit Europe next summer.
10. She (take, **takes**) her dog for a walk each evening.
11. The brother and sister (**want**, wants) to visit their aunt and uncle.
12. The high school senior, along with his parents, (**is**, are) upset over the sudden policy change.
13. The songs they sing (**stay**, stays) in my mind all day.
14. Ten dollars (**is**, are) too much to charge for such a small item.
15. She and her mother (**talk**, talks) on the phone almost every day.
16. The blue ones (**seem**, seems) to match best.
17. Teenagers and their parents (**see**, sees) things very differently.



18. She, against her aunt's wishes, (have, **has**) decided to go skiing instead.
 19. When the two of them (**go**, goes) together, they always have fun.
 20. He and his girlfriend (**love**, loves) to go camping.

Subject Verb Agreement Practice

Circle the correct form of the verb tense and indicate the rule that determines the correct answer.

- 6 1. Formal trousers (is, **are**) required for this dinner party.
1 2. Her friend and mentor (were, **was**) one of her college professors.
2 3. Neither a dog nor a cat (offer, **offers**) the same companionship as another person.
4 4. On the other side of the street (**are**, is) a restaurant and a clothing store.
4 5. In the back seat of his car (was, **were**) three books and his briefcase.
6 6. Three hours (are, **is**) not going to be enough time to travel that distance.
3 7. The pressure of academic life can sometimes (**tempt**, tempts) students to cheat.
5 8. Everyone in the group (**was**, were) supposed to meet at the front gate at 7:00.
5 9. Each of these books (**was**, were) useful in my grammar review.
3 10. The professor, along with many of his students, (**is**, are) preparing for the end of the semester.
2 11. I don't think either of these cars (are, **is**) reliable enough for a long road trip.
10 12. The criteria for passing the exam (**are**, is) becoming more difficult.
4 13. (Are, **Is**) Lois or Kate your choice for the promotion?
1 14. Algebra and geometry (is, **are**) the only math courses being offered this semester.
6 15. Athletics (have, **has**) been a matter of increasing interest among women.
5 16. Every one of the guests (have, **has**) had an opportunity to wish the couple well.
3 17. The results of the latest standardized exams (**indicate**, indicates) an increase in standards at the school.
4 18. According to the newspaper, there (**were**, was) three main suspects questioned.
4 19. (**Have**, Has) the spring training programs begun yet?
3 20. My favorite literature to read (are, **is**) modern American poetry.

Subject Verb Agreement Practice

Circle the correct form of the verb tense and indicate the rule that determines the correct answer.

- 1 1. I am certain that both Catherine and Lucy (is, **are**) coming to visit this weekend.
6 2. The scissors (is, **are**) kept in the top desk drawer.
2 3. Neither the twins nor their older brother (have, **has**) ever seen snow.
6 4. Some of the fruit (have, **has**) already begun to ripen.
6 5. The news reported by the president of the college (are, **is**) considered bad by most people.
10 6. The media (**are**, is) planning elaborate coverage of the event.
5 7. Neither of my neighbors (invite, **invites**) me over very often.
3 8. My aunt, as well as all of my cousins, (have, **has**) been sick this past week.
6 9. Over twelve gallons of gas (are, **is**) used each week because of our commute to work.
6 10. How much (**is**, are) twenty times fourteen?



- _8_ 11. He is one of the professors who (**attract**, attracts) a large number of students.
- _3_ 12. The major concern, which is why we changed our plans, (are, **is**) the children.
- _3_ 13. Most of the school corridors, which are extremely old, (**are**, is) in need of paint.
- _5_ 14. When the rain begins to fall harder, every swimmer (are, **is**) told get out of the water.
- _6_ 15. One hundred dollars (**is**, are) being offered for information about the crimes.
- _6_ 16. Their high pressure sales tactics (is, **are**) resented by many people.
- _3_ 17. The phenomenon that surprised many people (were, **was**) explained by the leading scientist in the field.
- _5_ 18. None of the Southern states (**have**, has) ever experienced much snow.
- _10_ 19. There (**are**, is) very strict criteria for passing the exam.
- _5_ 20. The commercial states that every product they sell (are, **is**) superior to their main competitor's products.

Subject Verb Agreement Practice

Select the sentence that has an error in subject verb agreement.

1. A. Both Christine and Heather have published their stories in major journals.
B. Neither student has the assignment completed.
C. The problems take them all evening to complete.
D. He is one of the students who has taken the exam.
2. A. He and his girlfriend talk on the phone constantly.
B. Neither she nor her mother wants to go to the dinner.
C. The professor or one of her research assistants is at every meeting.
D. The longest of the meetings are the first one of the semester.
3. A. The young couple has a new home in a beautiful neighborhood.
B. Either the professor or his students have prepared the grant submission.
C. Has an instructor or one of the lab assistants come to help you?
D. Neither the students nor their professor are going to the meeting.
4. A. The jury are taking their seats in the courtroom now.
B. The number of students are increasing.
C. Each of her daughters has developed a unique style.
D. Neither Suzi nor her sister has been able to find the missing earring.
5. **A. There seem to be a growing interest in that class.**
B. Either the students or their parents have spoken to the board.
C. When all of the tests are finished, the scientists will have more information.
D. Everyone except the lead suspect has given a statement to the police.
6. **A. Two books, a pen, a steno tablet, and some candy was found in the briefcase.**
B. Someone in the class or Sara critiques each presentation.
C. The child's demands irritate the parents.
D. Each of the students wears a white shirt with blue pants.



7.
 - A. Each of the applicants completes an entrance exam, which requires an essay.
 - B. Every member of the chorus was complemented on the production.
 - C. The children, the mother, and the father were there supporting the team.
 - D. There has been problems with the outdated policy.
8.
 - A. The time the classes are offered have made it difficult for many students.
 - B. The worker's tasks have not been neglected.
 - C. Dr. Jones, as well as Ms. Griffin, attends the conference every year.
 - D. One of the members has not returned from the recess.
9.
 - A. The new system of taking messages have helped our response time tremendously.
 - B. Neither one of the children has agreed to come to the meeting.
 - C. The student, as well as her parents, was pleased with the grade report.
 - D. Either the student or his parents have collected his books.
10.
 - A. Neither John nor his sisters has completed an information form.
 - B. A book, a pen, and paper were on the desk.
 - C. Either the student or one of the panel members respond to each question.
 - D. The committee debate the issues among themselves after each open session.



Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. The antecedent of a pronoun is the word to which the pronoun refers. The pronoun and its antecedent agree in gender and number.

Jane called *her* friend. *Jane* and *her* are both singular and feminine.
John called *his* friend. *John* and *his* are both singular and masculine.

The *girls* finished *their* job. The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.
The *boys* finished *their* job. The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.

The pronoun is masculine (he, his, him) when the antecedent is masculine, and feminine (she, her, hers) when the antecedent is feminine, and neutral (it, its) when the antecedent has no gender association.

A plural pronoun should be used with a compound antecedent joined by *and*.

Mary and Bill ran until *they* were exhausted.

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

A plural pronoun is used with two or more plural antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.

Ben or Tom will give *his* presentation today.
Either the *juniors or the seniors* are singing *their* class song.

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

The boy or his *parents* will present *their* idea.
The parents or the *boy* will present *his* idea.

Use a singular pronoun when a collective noun refers to a group as a single unit. Use a plural pronoun when the collective noun refers to a group's members as individuals.

The *class* decided *it* wanted to do the project.
The *class* stayed in *their* desks.

Use singular pronouns to refer to indefinite pronouns (words like *everybody*, *none*, *nobody*, *someone*) used as antecedents.

Each of the boys had *his* assignment ready.
Everyone on the women's team improved *her* time.
Everybody on the committee had *his or her* own agenda.

Use the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *which*, and *that* with the appropriate antecedents.

Who refers to people and animals that have names.
He is the one *who* committed the crime.
Which refers to animals and things.
The biology *book*, *which* is on the table, was very helpful.
That refers to animals, things and sometimes to people.
The *house that* is on the right is being demolished.



Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement Practice

Circle the correct form of the pronoun.

1. Jane and Sarah said (she, **they**) were too tired to skate any longer.
2. Either Bill or John will bring a sample of (**his**, their) own work.
3. Jane and Jill called (her, **their**) friend.
4. Either Jane or her friends will present (her, **their**) project.
5. Neither Mary nor Susan said (**she**, they) would be there.
6. Every student wants to impress (**his or her**, their) professors.
7. Both John and Jim said (he, **they**) were not exercising regularly.
8. The jury was asked to return to (its, **their**) seats.
9. Please remind each student to bring (**his or her**, their) homework tomorrow.
10. Neither John nor Bob was willing to admit that (**he**, they) had cheated.
11. Each of the girls had (**her**, their) assignment completed.
12. Every worker in this office needs (**his or her**, their) own computer.
13. The committee finally made (**its**, their) decision public.
14. Nobody remembered to bring (**his or her**, their) photos.
15. Neither girl will wear (**her**, their) black pants.
16. Beth and Jane reported the problem to (her, **their**) supervisor.
17. Each teacher turned in (**his or her**, their) grades to the principal.
18. The choir presented (**its**, their) final performance.
19. Either the employees or Ms. Jones will make (their, **her**) presentation.
20. Both Suzi and Beth will try to see (her, **their**) parents over the weekend.

Select the sentence that is incorrect in each group.

1. A. Each of the students should bring his or her text book to the study session.
B. Both Christine and George brought their children with them to the meeting.
C. Everyone wanted to share their observations.
D. When people are interrogated relentlessly, they tend to grow weary.
2. A. John and Jane are combining their money to purchase a larger gift for their parents.
B. Neither Steve nor Gary wanted to present his own ideas.
C. Sandy was the only one in the class who had his or her homework.
D. If anyone wants the tickets, they need to call me tonight.
3. A. The members of the team played their hardest.
B. Bob is one of those teachers who consider themselves privileged to work with students.
C. The tour guide, as well as the entire group, checked their supply list.
D. Either my sister or my cousin will bring her video camera.



4.

A. Everyone should write their name on the top of their test.

B. If students need help, they should make an appointment to meet with a tutor.

C. Neither of them will wear her costume once the performance is over.

D. Both girls will try to see their relatives in New York.
5.

A. Nobody in the class completed his or her assignment perfectly.

B. The students, rather than the professor, will present their theory at the conference.

C. Every instructor and every administrator stated his or her opinion.

D. The committee is making their final presentation this evening.
6.

A. The group of student workers are distributing the schedule which was developed.

B. The principal, as well as the teachers, initiated his request for parental help.

C. Every employee must wear his or her identification badge.

D. The mother and the father explained their concern.
7.

A. Either Sally or Christine will present their congratulations to the winner.

B. The students, as well as the principal, expressed their opposition to the board's decision.

C. John, rather than Dianne or Phil, brought his design for the poster.

D. Many of them will see their friends at the conference.
8.

A. If anyone objects to the decision, they should say so now.

B. Everyone was quiet until he or she heard the speaker's controversial remark.

C. The audience showed their boredom by moving around during the presentation.

D. She is the type of student who tries his or her hardest.
9.

A. Anyone who thinks the task seems easy should try it themselves.

B. Neither Ruth nor Betty was late for her appointment.

C. Nobody thought about bringing his or her portfolio.

D. Both Ann and Sarah asked if they could turn her assignment in late.
10.

A. Someone has forgotten to complete their registration form.

B. Joan, as well as both of her sisters, wanted to complete her assignment over the weekend.

C. Neither Greg nor his brothers remembered their password.

D. David and Sarah, as well as John, filed their complaint.



Pronoun Case

There are three pronoun cases.

1. **Subjective Case-** Pronouns used as subjects.
2. **Objective Case-** Pronouns used as objects of verbs or prepositions.
3. **Possessive Case-** Pronouns which express ownership.

Subjective Pronouns	Objective Pronouns	Possessive Pronouns
I	me	my (mine)
you	you	your (yours)
he	him	his
she	her	her (hers)
it	it	its
we	us	our (ours)
they	them	their (theirs)
who	whom	whose

The Subjective Pronouns are categorized into person and number.

Person	Number		
	Singular	Plural	
First	I	we	person(s) speaking
Second	you	you	person(s) spoken to
Third	he she it	they	person(s) spoken about

The pronouns *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, and *which* do not change form.



Parallel Structure

All items in a series should be parallel in form. An established pattern should be maintained throughout the sentence.

She taught biology, chemistry, and anatomy.

A pattern of nouns is established.

Subject	verb	noun	noun	noun
She	taught	biology	chemistry	anatomy

My preference is to take classes in the morning and to work in the afternoon.

"to _____" and "to _____"

She suggested reviewing your notes and getting plenty of sleep the night before the exam.

"____ ing" and "____ ing"

He is probably in the meeting or in the library.

(prep. phrase) or (prep. phrase)

I am elated when the leaves change color in the autumn and when the snow falls in the winter.

(prep. phrase) and (prep. phrase)

Parallel Construction Practice

Many of the following sentences lack parallel construction. Cross out any part that is not parallel, and write the correction above.

- I have been to the grocery store, put the groceries away, and ~~started dinner~~ ^{started dinner.}
- He wanted a job with fewer hours and ~~that the salary would be higher.~~ ^{a higher salary.}
- She was a wonderful student, a great cook, and ~~she was a very loyal friend.~~ ^{a loyal friend.}
- It is important to be on time and ~~making~~ ^{to make} a good impression.
- Their choices were going to the movies, walking along the beach, or the carnival. ^{going to} ↓
- I finished my assignment, ate dinner, and ~~then I decided to watch television.~~ ^{watched television.}
- She promised to be there early, and ~~she will also~~ ^{to} bring a cake.
- He entered quietly, slowly, and ~~with care.~~ ^{carefully.}
- I wanted to go to Chicago ~~but also~~ ^{and} to New York.



10. She considered majoring in chemistry, biology, or ~~studying~~ literature.
11. We can improve the building by making less noise, not leaving clutter around, and ~~we~~ ~~repainting~~ ~~should repaint~~ the walls.
12. The student failed because his work was always turned in late, was incomplete, and messy. ~~was~~ ↓
13. He loves swimming ~~and to go~~ fishing in the summer.
14. Good public relations involves patience, ~~tact, and tolerance.~~ ~~being tactful, and to display tolerance.~~
15. She finds reading the newspaper and ~~to walk~~ walking through book stores calming.
16. We looked for students whose motivation was high, whose interests were focused, and ~~there~~ ~~who had~~ ~~was~~ a high level of energy.
17. She told me to try relaxation exercises and ~~going~~ ~~to go~~ to bed early the night before the exam.
18. The child loves watching television, playing baseball, and ~~school.~~ ~~going to~~ ↓
19. The new dress code applied ~~not only~~ to students, ~~and~~ teachers, ~~but~~ administrators. ~~were~~ ~~included too.~~ ~~and~~
20. That professor is always either grading papers or ~~works~~ ~~Working~~ with students in tutoring sessions.



Misplaced Modifiers

The placement of modifiers is crucial to the meaning of sentences. Notice how the placement of the modifier *only* impacts the meaning of the sentences in the following examples.

The woman only serves dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (She does no other activities.)
Only the woman serves dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (The woman is the only server)
The woman serves dinner only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (Those are the only days.)
The woman serves only dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (Breakfast or lunch is not served.)
The only woman serves dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (There is just one woman server.)

Misplaced modifiers are words, phrases, and clauses that are ambiguous or confusing because they are not placed appropriately in relation to the words they modify.

Ambiguity can often be resolved by placing the modifiers near (usually directly before) the words they modify.

The woman carrying a baby who was scared and sick drew much attention.
The reader cannot know if it is the woman or the baby who is scared and sick.

The scared and sick woman who was carrying a baby drew much attention.
It is clear that the woman is scared and sick.
The woman who was carrying a scared and sick baby drew much attention.
It is clear that the baby is scared and sick.

Elliptical Clauses appear as dangling modifiers because they could contain a subject and a verb but do not. Such sentences can be clarified by providing a subject and a verb.

As a child, my mother taught me to play the piano.
(It is unclear who the child is in this sentence.)
When I was a child, my mother taught me to play the piano.

Intrusive Modifiers interrupt sentences by dividing parts of verb phrases, parts of infinitives, subjects and their verbs, or objects and their object complements.

She had, without considering the consequences, left without permission.

Intrusive modifiers can be corrected by rearranging the phrases so that none are split (interrupted).
Without considering the consequences, she left without permission.



Modifier Practice

Correct the modification errors in the following sentences.

1. Mother gave candy **which was sweet** to my friend.
2. The professor explained to the students **before the semester began** that the course would be hard work.
3. **Because she was distracted by the special sales in the store**, she forgot half of the items on the list.
4. **The dean**, after not having taught any classes for many semesters, wanted to return to the classroom. ↓ the dean
5. We served juice **in plastic cups** to the children in the play room.
6. We saw Jane **walking with her boyfriend** at the new mall.
7. **The committee members and** the issues for discussion have been determined.
8. **In their last article**, the authors include a complete explanation of the system of government checks and balances.
9. **In their pamphlet**, the fire safety experts advise people to check all smoke detectors.
10. **The papers** that had been written by the students **were in the recycling container**.
11. The woman put the child **with a fever** to bed.
12. Many members of the audience **used binoculars to watch the performance**.
13. The paper **that I was throwing away** was torn.
14. I knew **before I registered** that the course would require hard work.
15. The professor said **she would answer questions** at the end of class.
16. **Because it is required of all students**, the class always has a large enrollment.
17. The boy bought **the toy he always wanted** with his birthday money.
18. I pointed out the painting **on the wall** to my friend.
19. After she broke her hip, she was not **normally** able to walk **normally**.
20. **Because of the approaching holiday**, the children were extremely excited.



Shifts

Writing should be consistent in tense, voice, mood, person, and number.

Shifts in Tense

She *makes* a bold proclamation and then *rushed* down the stairs.

The teacher *told* the students they would not pass the course unless they *complete* all of their assignments.

Shifts in Voice

She wrote the introduction after the first chapter had been finished.

In the morning we painted the bedroom, and in the afternoon the curtains were hung.

After you complete the application, the form should be given to the personnel office.

Shifts in Mood

Read the chapter carefully, and then you *should answer* the questions at the end of the chapter.

It is important that she *read* the information and *writes* notes to review later.

Shifts in Person

I bought my furniture from that store because *you* pay no interest for one year.

When *one* begins college, *you* experience many new situations.

We sat through the beginning of the lecture, and *you* could tell the speaker was not prepared.

Shifts in Number

If a *student* does not have good study habits, *they* will have a difficult time in college.

Each person should be on time, or *they* will miss their appointment.

Practice in Sentence Shifts

Correct the inappropriate shift if needed in each of the sentences below. Some of the sentences are correct. Write *correct* if the sentence has no inappropriate shifts.

1. When ~~one~~ ^{you} must miss class, you should find out what material was covered.
2. Since she knew the course would be difficult, ^{she arranged} a tutor ~~was arranged by her.~~
3. Everywhere you look, ^{you} ~~I~~ see preparations for the holiday season.
4. My friend asked me to come for dinner and ~~also wants me~~ to bring my video tape.
5. Everyone was asked to bring his or her favorite dish to the pot luck dinner. *correct*
6. I was driving last night when ~~I see~~ ^{dashed} an animal ~~dash~~ out in front of my car.



7. When students apply to colleges, it is important that ~~he or she~~^{they} investigate each school thoroughly.
8. Go to the store after work, and then ~~you should~~ come straight home.
9. They arrived at the address, but the owners ~~were not found.~~^{↓ did not find} him or herself.
10. Everyone who was at the party seemed to enjoy ~~themselves.~~^{you}
11. If ~~one~~^{you} arrives late, you will miss the best part of the performance.
12. As soon as the meeting began, ~~the manager was paged by the secretary.~~^{↓ the secretary paged} fail
13. Most students pass that professor's class, but a few always ~~failed~~ the course.
14. Begin your assignment well in advance, and ~~you should~~ always proofread your paper carefully.
15. Jane and Sarah each made ~~their~~^{her} own dress.
16. After we developed the photographs, ~~they were posted on the internet by us.~~^{we posted them to the internet.}
17. The skater glided across the ice, and ~~was applauded by~~ the crowd ~~applauded.~~^{ed}
18. The cat devoured the entire can of tuna, and then looks up in triumph.
19. After we completed the training, the instructor ~~gives~~^{gave} us certificates.
20. When the big moment arrived, he ~~is~~^{was} more nervous than he expected.



Using the Comma

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

He is taking biology, English, history, and music.
Their options were going to a movie, going to Astroworld, or going to the beach.
Eggs, muffins, toast, and cereal were available for breakfast.

Use commas before a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) that combines sentences.

I didn't return her call last night, for it was too late when I got home.
She forgot her homework, and she wasn't prepared for the test.
She didn't want to stay very late, nor did she want to walk home alone.
He wanted to be on time for work, but he forgot to set his alarm.
You may stay and complete your assignment now, or you may finish the work at home.
They wanted to attend the presentation, yet they hadn't registered.
Their first choice was not available, so they were given their second choice.

Use commas to set off introductory phrases and clauses.

When I study, I have to have a quiet place with good lighting.
If you get anxious, try imagining yourself in a peaceful setting.
Although she wanted to go, she knew she would be in trouble if she got caught.

Use commas to set off nonessential elements (those which are not essential to the meaning of the sentence).

The movie, which was too long, had unrealistic characters and a poorly developed plot.
The child, who was lost in the store, was crying for her mother.
The car, which had been through an accident, required tremendous repair.

Use commas to separate two or more coordinate adjectives that describe the same noun.

The curious, enthusiastic child scurried through the kitchen.
The new student was a serious, dedicated scholar.
The old, dilapidated building was finally renovated.

Use commas to separate aspects of geographical names, dates (except between the month and day), addresses (except between the street number and street name), and titles in names.

She was born on July 7, 1958, in London, England.
Suzi Smith, MD., has an office at 101 Main Street, Chicago, Illinois.
Please deliver this to David Jones, Ph.D., 301 University Boulevard, Galveston, Texas.

**Use commas to separate the main discourse in a quotation.**

"Don't stay gone long," she insisted, "or I will be worried."
"By the time you get back," he explained, "we will have left."
She stomped her feet and yelled, "Why can't I go?"

Use commas to separate sharply contrasted elements.

He went to school, not home.
She bought a skirt, not pants.
They saw Jane, not Mike.

Use commas to prevent possible confusion or misreading.

Above, the stars showed more brightly than ever.
To Anne, Beth had been a true friend and mentor.
With them, he never felt like he belonged.

Comma Usage Practice

Place commas where appropriate in the following sentences. Some of the sentences are correct. If no commas are needed, mark the sentence "correct".

1. The grocery store, which is on Main Street, is just two blocks from my house.
2. We took food, bug spray, and a blanket to the picnic.
3. My classes meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week.
4. Without warning, the storm worsened and the electricity failed.
5. In the winter, I like to sit by the fireplace and drink hot chocolate.
6. He yelled, "I don't want to go!"
7. Silk, cotton, and rayon are popular clothing fabrics.
8. He said he could hear the children who were laughing in the park. correct
9. The twins were born on January 4, 1980, in Helsinki Finland.
10. In the summer, we have a two week vacation and go swimming as often as we can.
11. Finally, when the rain stopped, we were able to leave.
12. "Please hold," the secretary said, "while I transfer you to Ms. Adams."
13. She said she was with Jane, not John.
14. Above, the clouds looked like white cotton balls.
15. The dog will come home when he is tired and hungry. correct
16. January 4, 1939 is his birthday, and he wanted to celebrate in Paris, France.
17. The committee wanted to meet again, and the manager thought it was a good idea.
18. "When we enter the library," the teacher cautioned, "you must speak in very quiet voices."
19. I knew he wouldn't be available to speak on the phone, so I e-mailed him.
20. "Make sure you help clean up," Mother reminded us, "so that you will be invited back."



Comma Usage Practice

Place commas where appropriate in the following sentences. If no commas are needed, mark the sentence "correct".

1. No, I hadn't planned on going.
2. They had to vacuum the carpet, mop the floors, and dust the furniture before they left.
3. They knew they would be in trouble if they got caught sneaking in so late. correct
4. When they have to leave town, I take care of their pets.
5. Betty has the book, not Beth.
6. She was born in St. Petersburg, Florida on October 9, 1986, just two days after my little sister.
7. She said she would love to come to dinner, and she wants to bring the desert.
8. "Where are you going?" she asked. correct
9. Before class, I always make sure my pencil is sharpened and that I have plenty of blank paper.
10. My aunt, who is a lawyer, revels in accepting the impossible cases.
11. "Does it matter," he asked, "which one of us wins?"
12. I wanted to see a basketball game, walk through the park, and watch the play.
13. Below, there was a line for your signature.
14. The large, red notebook belongs to the teacher.
15. She reminded us to sign the attendance sheet so that we would receive credit for being there.
correct
16. She bought bananas, apples, and oranges.
17. She said we may go, but we have to come directly home afterwards.
18. A small, green calendar was left on the desk.
19. Finally, she passed her certification exam.
20. The video was terrible, so we cut it off early.



Apostrophe

Apostrophes have three main uses:

1. To indicate possession
2. To indicate an omission of letters or numbers
3. To separate the *s* from plural letters/numbers and abbreviations followed by periods.

Apostrophes are always used with possessive nouns.

Singular nouns are followed by an 's

Chris's poem
boy's room
director's desk

Plural nouns which end in "s" are followed by an apostrophe

girls' shoes
Jones' house
dancers' dressing room

Plural nouns which do not end in "s" are followed by an 's

children's school
mice's maze
women's group

Do not use apostrophes with possessive pronouns (my, your, their, her, its, yours, theirs, ours, hers, his, etc.)

their room
our home
its paw

Contractions always require apostrophes to indicate the omission of letters.

it is = it's
was not = wasn't
he is = he's
1999 = '99

Apostrophes are used to separate the *s* from plural letters/numbers and abbreviations followed by a title

She made three A's
My phone number has four 2's
One of the Ph.D.'s came forward first in the commencement.



Apostrophes Practice

Add apostrophes where appropriate in the following sentences. Some of the sentences are correct. If no apostrophes are needed, mark the sentence "correct".

1. The kitten slept on the child's bed.
2. The Smiths' children were all good singers.
3. He made three A's for the semester.
4. She'll start college next semester.
5. She's determined to make all As.
6. The mother picked up the children's toys
7. The girls wanted to play basketball. correct
8. There's no substitute for good preparation.
9. They're wondering if the boy's car is in his driveway.
10. His testimony was that he hadn't been there since the summer of '89.
11. She's willing to go, but they've already left.
12. All of the students' parents would be arriving throughout the day.
13. One of the M.D.'s got into a debate with one of the Ph.D.s.
14. The boys finished their homework early so that they could watch the game. correct
15. She found the street, but couldn't remember if the address had two 3's or three 2's.
16. You could hear the mice's squeaks from the condemned kitchen.
17. I would have borrowed Jane's book, but hers was an older version.
18. The women's restroom is to the right.
19. Tom and Bill have both said they'll be there.
20. I'm not going unless you're coming.
21. It's getting late, and I haven't finished my homework yet.
22. She mistakenly thought Joan's book was hers.
23. John's novel is based on his parents' experience of immigrating to the United States.
24. They're eager to go ahead and announce their decision.
25. The children's room was painted in bright reds, yellows, and blues.



Quotation Marks

Quotation marks enclose direct quotations. Only the actual words spoken should go within the quotation marks.

He said, "Yes, you may go."

Do not use quotation marks if the words are paraphrased.

He said that I may go.

Single quotes are used to indicate a quote within a quote.

The proud father replied, "My baby said 'Daddy.'"

Periods and commas go inside the closing of quotation marks.

"You may go," Mother said, "as long as you are home in time for dinner."

Exclamation marks and question marks are used inside the quotes when they apply to the quoted material and outside the quotes when they apply to the whole sentence.

Jane asked, "Are we going to Disney World?"

Did Jane say, "We're going to Disney World"?

Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks.

Ed suggested, "Let's go to the park"; however, Jim was too tired.

Quotation marks enclose words used in a special sense.

He had a reputation for being a "fast talker" who used high-pressure sales tactics.

The child's "horse" was a mop she pretended to ride.

Quotation marks are used to enclose short passages being quoted.

In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T.S. Eliot reminds us, "In a minute there is time / For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse."

Quotation marks are used to enclose titles of

- articles
- short stories
- short poems
- songs
- chapters
- speeches
- episodes of radio or television series



Quotation Mark Practice

Place the quotation marks and the correct punctuation where needed in the following sentences.

1. Jenny said, "I'm ready."
2. Bill asked, "Where are you going?"
3. The article in the newspaper was entitled "How to Avoid Mail Fraud."
4. Did John actually say "I'm dropping my class"?
5. The second chapter in the biology book is entitled "The Function of the Cell."
6. "I will be there," she replied, "but I'll be a little late."
7. "Please," begged the child, "tell me a story."
8. Did she ask, "Who wants to go with me"?
9. "If you want to go," she cautioned, "you must be here by 7:00."
10. Joan asked, "How much longer do I have to wait?"
11. "There was nobody there," she responded, "so I left."
12. Dave yelled, "stop" just in time to stop the child from walking into the street.
13. He sighed and said, "Finally, we can leave."
14. "I know all the words to the Star Spangled Banner," she replied.
15. "I'll see you at the meeting tonight," Susan said.
16. "We can leave tonight," she replied, "or we can wait until tomorrow."
17. "What time are you coming?" Jane asked.
18. She responded, "The Wasteland is the saddest poem."
19. Did he say, "Make sure you're home by midnight"?
20. She said, "Remember to bring the bread," however, he did forget.
21. "Read the chapter carefully," the professor said, "or you will be lost during the next lecture."
22. "Has he already gone?" she asked.
23. Joan suggested, "Let's go ice skating," however, she had forgotten about John's broken ankle.
24. The announcer yelled, "It's a home run!"
25. "When does the movie start?" she asked.



Capitalization

Capitalize

- The first word of every sentence
- First and last words and all important words in titles
- *O* and *I* when used as words
- The first word in a direct quotation
- The first word in every line of poetry unless the poet you quote does not do so
- Proper nouns and proper adjectives
- Titles when they come before proper names
- Abbreviations for academic degrees when they come after proper nouns
- Important words in the salutation of a letter
- First word in the close of a letter
- Initials

Capitalization Practice

Draw a line through any letters that should be capitalized and write the appropriate capitalization above the deletion.

1. ~~Mr. Jones~~ is staying at the ~~Ritz Carlton Hotel~~ in ~~Chicago, Illinois~~.
2. ~~Dear Friends and Colleagues~~,
3. ~~A Tale of Two Cities~~ is my favorite novel by ~~Charles Dickens~~.
4. ~~I~~ have to take ~~American history, English, Spanish, biology, and algebra~~.
5. ~~The~~ current president of our club is ~~Sandy Smith~~.
6. ~~Jane Smith~~ is the principal of our high school.
7. ~~My aunt Betty's~~ address is 645 ~~Main Street~~ in ~~Denver, Colorado~~.
8. ~~Professor Adams~~ is teaching ~~Biology 1013, Chemistry 2003, and Anatomy 1007~~.
9. ~~Dr. Smith~~ was granted his ~~Ph.D.~~ from ~~Harvard University~~ several years ago.
10. ~~John and Mary~~ both attend ~~Nimitz High School~~ in the ~~Aldine School District~~.
11. ~~Sincerely yours~~,
12. ~~The~~ marching band from the ~~University of Texas~~ will perform in the ~~Thanksgiving Day~~ parade.
13. ~~Uncle Bob~~ and aunt ~~Jane~~ never manage to stay awake until midnight on ~~New Year's Eve~~.
14. ~~The~~ faculty of ~~Department of English~~ will host a reception this ~~Friday~~.
15. ~~We~~ saw the musical ~~Cats~~ on ~~Broadway~~ while we were in ~~New York~~.



16. Charles' birthday is August 12, and his aunt Sarah's birthday is August 25.
17. Robert Smith, M.D. established his practice in Houston, Texas last spring.
18. May I accompany you on your visit with the senator in June?
19. My French professor is Dr. A. M. Sullivan.
20. Jamaica is my favorite Caribbean vacation destination.
21. She received her Ph.D. in psychology from Harvard University last spring.
22. She decided to attend Southwest Texas State University and major in elementary education.
23. John, my mother, and my aunt attended a production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* last weekend.
24. Sandy loves music; she attends symphony performances at Jones Hall as often as she can.
25. Dr. Arons, Dean of the College of Education, will speak at the symposium this spring.

**Usage**

Grammar usage refers to spelling and word choice such as *lie/lay*, *rise/raise*, *sit/set*, *to/too/two*. There are too many different usage choices to explain in one handout. Instead, look in your own textbook to review the section on usage and word choice. If you cannot find this section in your textbook, your teacher or a writing tutor can help you find it.

Another usage resource is the Alan Meyers workbook, Writing With Confidence, 3rd edition. See chapters 15, pp. 344-366, for examples and practice. This text is on reserve in the Main Desk, with the answer key available in the teacher's manual.

Conclusion

Once this packet is complete, you should take the practice Grammar Proficiency Test (Form Z), which is available on-line or on paper. Ask for it in the Writing Center. A score of 26 is passing. Your score on the practice test will let you know whether you are ready to take the actual test. After you take the practice test, you may want to take your results to a writing tutor to go over the errors you made. Your goal is not only to obtain a passing score of the exam, but also to write clearly and correctly in your English class, your other college classes, and in your profession. Good luck!

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