

GRAMMAR SUCCESS

IN 20 MINUTES A DAY



2nd Edition



**OTHER TITLES OF INTEREST FROM
LEARNINGEXPRESS**

Algebra Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Biology Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Chemistry Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Earth Science Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Physics Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Practical Math Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Reading Comprehension Success
Reasoning Skills Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Statistics Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Trigonometry Success in 20 Minutes a Day
Vocabulary and Spelling Success

Copyright © 2010 LearningExpress, LLC.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions.
Published in the United States by LearningExpress, LLC, New York.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Grammar success in 20 minutes a day. —2nd ed.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-1-57685-721-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 1-57685-721-2 (pbk. : alk. paper) 1. English language—Grammar—Problems, exercises, etc.

I. LearningExpress (Organization)

PE1112.G676 2010

428.2—dc22

2009024478

Printed in the United States of America

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN: 978-1-57685-721-2

For information on LearningExpress, other LearningExpress products, or bulk sales, please write to us at

LearningExpress
2 Rector Street
26th Floor
New York, NY 10006

Or visit us at

www.learnatest.com

Contents



INTRODUCTION	v	
PRETEST	1	
NOUNS and PRONOUNS		
LESSON 1	Kinds of Nouns <i>Common, proper, concrete, abstract, collective, and compound nouns</i>	13
LESSON 2	Noun Usage <i>Plural and possessive nouns</i>	19
LESSON 3	Pronouns <i>Personal, reflexive, demonstrative, relative, interrogative, and indefinite pronouns</i>	27
VERBS		
LESSON 4	Verb Types <i>Action, linking, and helping verbs</i>	35
LESSON 5	Regular and Irregular Verbs <i>Common regular and irregular verbs, problem, and tricky verbs</i>	39
LESSON 6	Verb Forms and Tenses <i>Present and past, present and past participle, and other verb forms; basic tense review</i>	49
MODIFIERS		
LESSON 7	Adjectives <i>Articles, pronouns as adjectives, and demonstrative and comparative adjectives</i>	57

CONTENTS

LESSON 8	Adverbs	63
	<i>Common adverbs, comparative adverbs, and how to distinguish adverbs from adjectives</i>	
LESSON 9	Prepositions	69
	<i>Common prepositions and how to distinguish prepositions from adverbs</i>	
LESSON 10	Misplaced Modifiers and Tricky Words	73
	<i>Kinds of modifiers, homonyms, and homographs</i>	
SENTENCE STRUCTURE		
LESSON 11	Sentence Basics	85
	<i>Subjects, predicates, complements, and direct and indirect objects</i>	
LESSON 12	Agreement	91
	<i>Subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement</i>	
LESSON 13	Phrases	97
	<i>Prepositional, adjective, adverb, verbal, participial, infinitive, gerund, and appositive phrases</i>	
LESSON 14	Clauses	101
	<i>Independent, subordinate, noun, adjective, and adverb clauses</i>	
LESSON 15	Conjunctions	107
	<i>Coordinating, corrective, and subordinating conjunctions</i>	
LESSON 16	Combining Sentences	113
	<i>Kinds of sentences, including compound, complex, and compound-complex, that enliven writing</i>	
PUNCTUATION		
LESSON 17	End Punctuation	121
	<i>Periods, question marks, and exclamation points</i>	
LESSON 18	Internal Punctuation I	125
	<i>Commas, colons, and semicolons</i>	
LESSON 19	Internal Punctuation II	133
	<i>Apostrophes, hyphens, and dashes</i>	
LESSON 20	Internal Punctuation III	139
	<i>Quotation marks, parentheses, brackets, italics and underlining, and parentheses</i>	
POSTTEST		147

Introduction

Do your grammar skills need some brushing up? Perhaps you have an exam on the horizon, or you want to hone your grammar skills to improve your writing or speech. Whatever the case may be, this quick reference guide will help put you well on your way toward accomplishing your grammar goals—no matter how big or small.

Because English is so complex, rules and guidelines called grammar and usage are necessary to help us better understand its many idiosyncrasies. While language is forever changing to meet our needs, the inner workings of a sentence are, for the most part, as constant as the stars, and figuring out these dynamics is like putting a puzzle together (or taking it apart).

Understanding the inner workings of a sentence can help you with your speech and writing—the essence of communication and language. And the benefits you get for your efforts far outweigh the 20 minutes of your day you'll spend with this book.

Before you begin to progress through the book, take the pretest on the next few pages to determine what you already know and what you might need to focus on. You might be surprised by just how much you remember!

Pretest

Before you start your study of grammar skills, get an idea of how much you already know and how much you need to learn by taking the pretest that follows. It consists of 50 multiple-choice questions about what is in this book. Naturally, 50 questions can not cover every single concept or rule you will learn by working through these lessons, so even if you answer all the questions correctly, it is almost guaranteed that you will find a few things in the book you did not already know. If you get lots of answers wrong on the pretest, do not worry—this book will teach you how to improve your grammar and writing, step by step.

Record your answers in this book. If it does not belong to you, list the numbers 1–50 on a piece of paper and write your answers there. Take as much time as you need to finish the test. When you finish, check your answers against the answer key that follows the test. Each answer lists the lesson of the book that covers the concept(s) in that question. If you get a high score on the pretest, you may be able to spend less time with this book than you originally planned. If you get a low score, you may find you will need more than 20 minutes a day to learn all that you need to know. Good luck.

Pretest

1. Circle the common nouns.

chair	joy	knitted
Australia	supermarket	Ohio
Monticello	understanding	toddlers
saucepan	dancing	hostess

2. Circle the abstract nouns.

peace	telephone	livelihood
deceit	cheerfulness	jungle
NASA	smile	rubber band
test	eyelash	patience

3. Circle the proper nouns.

Texas	Work	Clock
Puzzle	Nancy	Mr. Klondike
Licorice	Mexico City	Basketball
IBM	Spiderman	Mt. Everest

4. Circle the nouns that are pluralized correctly.

halves	theorys	oxen
casinoes	inchs	dishes
valleyes	houses	mother-in-laws
booths	tooths	hippopotami

5. Circle the hyphenated nouns that are spelled correctly.

sister-in-laws	kilowatt-hours
runner-ups	forget-me-nots
follow-ups	sticks-in-the-mud

6. Circle the nouns that have been made possessive correctly.

child's	her's	Jody's
Congress'	tooth's	cactus's
puppies'	moms'	Jason's
women's	his'	dress's

7. Circle the antecedents/pronouns that agree in gender.

tree/it	Anthony/she
King Henry/he	passenger/it
kangaroo/his	Alice/her

8. Circle the antecedents/pronouns that agree in number.

kids/him	everybody/they
Kathy and I/it	fish/they
group/it	fish/it
each/he or she	woman/we
both/they	

9. Circle the interrogative pronouns.

who	when	whose
which	whom	whomever
how	where	what

10. Circle the subjective case pronouns.

I went to his house and saw him.
She brought me an apple and I thanked her.
They went to Pat's and called me.

11. Circle the objective case pronouns.

He threw it toward me.
Pass me the salt.
We made them sandwiches.

12. Circle the reflexive case pronouns and underline the possessive case pronouns.

Carlo was angry, but stopped himself before
he said something really mean to his
brother.
I was so tired I couldn't force myself to get
dressed and join my friends at the mall.
Some people take themselves too seriously
and think it's their responsibility to solve
everyone else's problems!

- 13.** Circle the demonstrative pronouns and underline the relative pronouns.

That is the most annoying sound that I have ever heard.

Those are the boxes of blankets that Mom plans to take to the SPCA.

Is this the channel that you were watching?

- 14.** Circle the action verbs.

wash	be	hold	cook
would	buy	pray	gnaw
put	write	loan	marry

- 15.** Circle the linking verbs.

appear	took	become	sat
feel	prove	call	grow
study	look	is	lose

- 16.** Circle the regular verbs and underline the irregular verbs.

forgive	grow	buy	walk
wash	hide	sew	pet
sit	hear	play	throw

- 17.** Circle the correct form of lay/lie in each sentence.

Joy found her hairbrush (laying, lying) in the suitcase.

The swing has (lain, laid) broken behind the shed for two years.

The boy had (laid, lain) awake before getting up to play.

- 18.** Circle the correct form of sit/set in each sentence.

The class (set, sat) patiently as the teacher took attendance.

Claudia's aunt (sits, sets) the table while Gert cooks dinner.

(Setting, Sitting) on the porch on a cool summer night is the best.

- 19.** Circle the correct tricky verb in each sentence.

Sandy carefully (hanged, hung) her new curtains on the window.

Peter tried to (accept, except) Jim's explanation, but it was difficult.

You (can, may) take another glass of lemonade if you like.

- 20.** Identify the tense of each verb as present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, future perfect, present progressive, past progressive, or future progressive.

will drive	am driving
had driven	drove
drive	has driven
drives	will have driven

- 21.** Circle the common adjectives in the following sentences.

The pungent aroma of Italian spices filled the busy kitchen of the pizzeria.

Shelley wore a blue dress to the wedding. We donated our old car to an automotive school where students practice doing repairs.

- 22.** Place the correct indefinite article in front of each noun.

<input type="checkbox"/> house	<input type="checkbox"/> elephant
<input type="checkbox"/> unicorn	<input type="checkbox"/> yellow flower
<input type="checkbox"/> one-way street	<input type="checkbox"/> honor
<input type="checkbox"/> underdog	<input type="checkbox"/> loafer
<input type="checkbox"/> unopened gift	<input type="checkbox"/> orange
<input type="checkbox"/> hour	<input type="checkbox"/> occasion
<input type="checkbox"/> wrist	<input type="checkbox"/> admirer
<input type="checkbox"/> upper level	

- 23.** Change the following proper nouns into proper adjectives.

Italy	Bahama	Africa
Texas	France	Hawaii
America	Virginia	Denmark
California	Belgium	China
Japan	Inca	England

- 24.** Determine whether the boldfaced word in each sentence is a possessive pronoun or a possessive adjective.

His sneakers were worn, so he bought new ones.

Marissa crossed **her** fingers and hoped the winning ticket would be **hers**.

My uncle showed me an autographed Babe Ruth baseball card and said it would one day be mine.

- 25.** Determine whether the boldfaced word in each sentence is a demonstrative pronoun or a demonstrative adjective.

This is really over the top!

Take **this** money and buy yourself a treat.

Watch **these** carefully while they boil.

- 26.** Determine which form of comparative or superlative adjective best completes each sentence.

Terry's (most high, highest) jump in the high jump was four feet, six inches.

Sean's bank account was (larger, more large) than mine.

Barbara was (best, better) at chess than her roommate Natalie.

- 27.** Circle the correct form of the comparative and superlative adverbs in the following sentences.

Joel was (less, least) active during the winter than during the summer.

The store brand's price was the (low, lower, lowest) of the three brands.

This was the (long, longer, longest) day of the year.

- 28.** Determine whether the boldfaced word in the sentence is an adjective or an adverb.

The accounting department ran at a **fast** but friendly pace.

Cory worked **hard** on improving his tennis swing for the tournament.

Nora was sent **straight** to her room for disobeying her parents.

- 29.** Identify the prepositional phrases in the following sentences.

Ferdinand Magellan was the first explorer to sail around the world.

Without a doubt, regular exercise is necessary for good health.

The little monkey ran around Mom's living room and climbed up the drapes.

- 30.** Determine whether the boldfaced word is a preposition or an adverb.

Holly was **beside** herself with fear when the child darted into the street.

If we can reach Hightstown **by** five, we may be able to see the president's motorcade go **by**.

Use caution when you walk **across** busy streets.

- 31.** Rewrite each sentence so that the misplaced modifiers are properly placed.

The woman was walking her dog with hair curlers.

Walking along the shore the sand burned my feet.

Tina bought a guinea pig for her brother they call Butterscotch.

- 32.** Using the clues, write the homonyms or homographs.

finished/tossed
trade event/equitable
the total/several
shut/nearby
dispatched/perfume
dress in/goods for sale

- 33.** Identify the simple subject in the following sentences.

Next week, Scott and Jennifer will get married.
Shopping sprees can be fun, but very expensive.
It may be too soon to tell.

- 34.** Identify the simple predicate in the following sentences.

Reading is good exercise for the brain.
Try again.
The log, when turned over, revealed a whole different world.

- 35.** Identify whether each boldfaced word is a direct or an indirect object in the following sentences.

Brandy took the **pot** of flowers and brought it into the garden window.
Grumbling to himself, Stan dragged the heavy **garbage cans** out to the street.
He gave **her** a **high-five** to assure her that all was well.

- 36.** Identify the verb that correctly agrees with the subject in each sentence.

Patty (fly, flies) frequently for work.
All of us (watch, watches) out for one another.
Nobody (want, wants) to play croquet in the the backyard with me.

- 37.** Identify the verb that correctly completes the following sentences.

Neither Jessica nor Marty (like, likes) to do the laundry.
Spaghetti and meatballs (is, are) my favorite Italian meal.
Sally or Zach (is, are) probably going to be the valedictorian this year.

- 38.** Circle the verb that agrees with the indefinite pronoun in each sentence.

Everyone (need, needs) to get any homework I assign in on time!
Will somebody (taste, tastes) this lasagna before I serve it to see if it's okay?
Many (stop, stops) by my office to get directions to your cubicle.

- 39.** Determine which pronoun best fits for proper pronoun/antecedent agreement in each sentence.

The boys took _____ time walking home from school.
Nobody saw _____ name on the cast list.
The scared joey hopped to _____ mother for security.

- 40.** Identify the adjective and adverb phrases in the following sentences.

Books with weak spines need to be reinforced to lengthen their shelf life.
The lizard scurried across the sidewalk and disappeared into the bushes.
The cashier with the red hair and braces was especially helpful.

- 41.** Identify the participial phrases, infinitive phrases, and gerund phrases in the following sentences.

Hoping to win the lottery, Harriet bought 50 tickets for tonight's drawing.

To help pass the time, Jake reads a book that he takes along.

Caring for her ailing grandmother is Lori's focus right now.

- 42.** Identify the appositive phrases in the following sentences.

Ron, a referee and mentor, is a fair-minded and friendly man.

Jeannine works for KTL, a public relations firm in Kansas City.

Molly, my student, has a very fanciful imagination.

- 43.** Determine whether each group of words is an independent or a subordinate clause.

If it doesn't rain

We plan to go

Take that back

Because I overslept

Cover your mouth

Remember her birthday

- 44.** Identify the adjective clause in each sentence.

Now I remember the guy that you described to me yesterday.

The house at the end of the road is where my father grew up.

The room next to the office is where the professors meet.

- 45.** Identify the noun clause in each sentence.

I can see what you mean.

What Wendy said took everyone by surprise.

How it ends remains to be seen.

- 46.** Identify the adverb clause in each sentence.

Unless he gets a pay raise, Brad won't be able to buy a new car.

I could get this job done faster if there were not so many distractions!

Although many cats are loners, they still look to humans for food and shelter.

- 47.** Identify the coordinating conjunction(s) and the word or group of words it is connecting in each sentence.

Logan or Melanie can go to the retreat if they want to.

Karla wanted to visit longer with her friend, but she had a long drive home and it was late.

We signed up for the early class so we could have the rest of the afternoon free.

- 48.** Identify the simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

a. We can go to dinner now or we can go after the concert.

b. When the judge announced the winner, the audience clapped loudly and gave him a standing ovation.

c. All of the graduates will receive a degree.

d. If you try harder, you will certainly achieve success.

PRETEST

- 49.** Add punctuation where necessary in the following sentences.

Nathans birthday is May 21 1991 which fell on a Monday this year

Mr Roberts left a message asking me to pick up these items staples printer paper correction fluid and two boxes of paper clips I guess the supply closet got raided All of the girls dresses were pink with white eyelet ruffles on the sleeves edges.

- 50.** Correctly place quotation marks, commas, and end marks in the following sentences.

Why do we need to know how to add or subtract fractions anyway Chris asked Mr. Bowen the math teacher

Im glad you came to the beach with me my cousin whispered because without you I couldnt make the most awesome sand castle and win the contest

Answers

If you miss any of the following questions, you may refer to the designated lesson for further explanation.

1. chair, supermarket, toddlers, saucepan, hostess (Lesson 1)
2. peace, livelihood, deceit, cheerfulness, patience (Lesson 1)
3. Texas, Nancy, Mr. Klondike, Mexico City, IBM, Spiderman, Mt. Everest (Lesson 1)
4. halves, oxen, dishes, houses, booths, hippopotami (Lesson 2)
5. kilowatt-hours, forget-me-nots, follow-ups, sticks-in-the-mud (Lesson 2)
6. child's, Jody's, Congress', tooth's, cactus's, puppies', mom's, Jason's, women's, dress's (Lesson 2)
7. tree/it, King Henry/he, Alice/her (Lesson 3)
8. fish/they, group/it, fish/it, each/he or she, both/they (Lesson 3)
9. who, whose, which, whom, whomever (Lesson 3)
10. **I** went to his house and saw him.
She brought me an apple and **I** thanked her.
They went to Pat's and called me.
 (Lesson 3)
11. He threw **it** toward **me**.
 Pass **me** the salt.
 We made **them** sandwiches.
 (Lesson 3)
12. Carlo was angry, but stopped **himself** before he said something really mean to **his** brother. I was so tired I couldn't force **myself** to get dressed and join **my** friends at the mall. Some people take **themselves** too seriously and think it's **their** responsibility to solve everyone else's problems! (Lesson 3)
13. **That** is the most annoying sound **that** I have ever heard.
Those are the boxes of blankets **that** Mom plans to take to the SPCA.
 Is **this** the channel **that** you were watching?
 (Lesson 3)
14. wash, hold, cook, buy, pray, gnaw, put, write, loan, marry (Lesson 4)
15. appear, become, feel, prove, grow, look (Lesson 4)
16. **forgive** **grow** **buy** **walk**
wash hide sew pet
sit hear play throw
 (Lesson 5)
17. lying, lain, lain (Lesson 5)
18. sat, sets, Sitting (Lesson 5)
19. hung, accept, may (Lesson 5)
20. will drive: future
 had driven: past perfect
 drive: present
 drives: present
 am driving: present progressive
 drove: past
 has driven: present perfect
 will have driven: future perfect
 (Lesson 6)
21. pungent, busy, blue, old, automotive (Lesson 7)
22. a house, a unicorn, a one-way street, an underdog, an unopened gift, an hour, a wrist, an upper level, an elephant, a yellow flower, an honor, a loafer, an orange, an occasion, an admirer (Lesson 7)
23. Italian, Bahamian, African, Texan, French, Hawaiian, American, Virginian, Danish, Californian, Belgian, Chinese, Japanese, Incan, English (Lesson 7)
24. **His**: possessive adjective; **her**: possessive adjective; **hers**: possessive pronoun; **My**: possessive adjective (Lesson 7)
25. **This**: demonstrative pronoun; **this**: demonstrative adjective; **these**: demonstrative pronoun (Lesson 7)
26. highest, larger, better (Lesson 7)
27. less, lowest, longest (Lesson 8)
28. **fast**: adjective; **hard**: adverb; **straight**: adverb (Lessons 7 and 8)

- 29.** around the world; Without a doubt; for good health; around Mom's living room; up the drapes (Lesson 9)
- 30.** **beside** herself: preposition; **by** five: preposition; **by**: adverb; **across** busy streets: preposition (Lesson 9)
- 31.** The woman with hair curlers was walking her dog. The sand burned my feet while I was walking along the shore.
Tina bought a guinea pig they call Butterscotch for her brother.
(Lesson 10)
- 32.** through/threw fair/fair
sum/some close/close
sent/scent wear/ware
(Lesson 10)
- 33.** Scott and Jennifer; Shopping sprees; It (Lesson 11)
- 34.** is; Try; revealed (Lesson 11)
- 35.** **pot**: direct object; **it**: direct object; **garbage cans**: direct object; **her**: indirect object; **high-five**: direct object (Lesson 11)
- 36.** flies, watch, wants (Lesson 12)
- 37.** likes, is, is (Lesson 12)
- 38.** needs, taste, stop (Lesson 12)
- 39.** their, his or her, its (Lesson 12)
- 40.** with weak spines: adjective phrase
across the sidewalk: adverb phrase; into the bushes: adverb phrase
with the red hair and braces: adjective phrase
(Lesson 13)
- 41.** Hoping to win the lottery: participial phrase
To help pass the time: infinitive phrase
Caring for her ailing grandmother: gerund phrase
(Lesson 13)
- 42.** a referee and mentor
a telecommunications company in Kansas City
my student
(Lesson 13)
- 43.** If it doesn't rain: subordinate clause
We plan to go: independent clause
Take that back: independent clause
- Because I overslept: subordinate clause
Cover your mouth: independent clause
Remember her birthday: independent clause
(Lesson 14)
- 44.** that you described
where my father grew up
where the professors meet
(Lesson 14)
- 45.** what you mean
What Wendy said
How it ends
(Lesson 14)
- 46.** Unless he gets a pay raise
if there were not so many distractions
Although many cats are loners
(Lesson 14)
- 47.** Logan **or** Melanie
Karla wanted to visit longer with her friend, **but** she had a long drive home **and** it was late.
We signed up for the early class **so** we could have the rest of the afternoon free.
(Lesson 15)
- 48.** **a.** compound; **b.** compound-complex; **c.** simple;
d. complex
(Lesson 16)
- 49.** Nathan's birthday is May 21, 1991, which fell on a Monday this year.
Mr. Roberts left a message asking me to pick up these items: staples, printer paper, correction fluid, and two boxes of paper clips; I guess the supply closet got raided.
All of the girls' dresses were pink with white eyelet ruffles on the sleeves' edges.
(Lessons 17–20)
- 50.** “Why do we need to know how to multiply or divide fractions anyway?” Chris asked Mr. Bowen, the math teacher.
“I’m glad you came to the beach with me,” my cousin whispered, “because without you I couldn’t make the most awesome sand castle and win the contest!” (Lessons 17–20)

Nouns and Pronouns



1



Kinds of Nouns

The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names.

—Chinese proverb

LESSON SUMMARY

Learn why the noun, and its six identifiable subgroups, is the fundamental component of our language.

Nouns, the most basic component of language, are naming words. They help us identify the persons, places, or things we talk about. There are six distinct groups of nouns: common nouns, proper nouns, concrete nouns, abstract nouns, collective nouns, and compound nouns.

It is important to know about nouns and their function in speaking and writing because so many other parts of speech relate to nouns. So, that is where we will start our grammar refresher. The following page briefly summarizes the six different noun groups and cites the unique qualities that separate them. Then we will look at each individual group in more detail.

The Six Types of Nouns

Common Nouns

A **common noun** is a word that speaks of something only in a general way, like *book*, *car*, and *person*. Common nouns can be written in singular form (*book*, *car*, and *person*) or plural (*books*, *cars*, and *people*).

Proper Nouns

Unlike common nouns, **proper nouns** name a very specific person, place, or thing. One distinguishing aspect of proper nouns is that they *always* begin with a capital letter. *Catcher in the Rye*, *BMW Z4*, and *Albert Einstein* are proper nouns.

Concrete Nouns

Concrete nouns name something that appeals to your senses. For instance, *toothbrush*, *cell phone*, *moonlight*, *waves*, and *breezes* are all concrete nouns.

Abstract Nouns

In contrast, **abstract nouns** name beliefs, concepts, and characteristics or qualities—things that can't be touched, seen, or accrued. For example, *composure*, *sovereignty*, *free enterprise*, *daring*, and *handsome* are abstract nouns.

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are words used to name people, places, and things in terms of a unit. For instance, *class*, *flock*, *herd*, and *family* are collective nouns.

Compound Nouns

New words can be formed by combining two or more words, thus creating a compound word. Compounds

can be made up of a number of speech components, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Some examples of compound nouns are *motorcycle*, *onlooker*, *input*, and *washing machine*.

Many nouns may fall into more than one of these categories. For example, the noun *school* (of fish) is common, concrete, and collective. The noun *well-being* is abstract and compound.

A Closer Look at Nouns

Proper nouns are easily distinguishable from common nouns by their capital letters. But be cautious. Don't assume that every word in a sentence that begins with a capital is a proper noun. Basic sentence structure dictates that every sentence must begin with a capital letter—remember that from English class? Also, what might appear to be a proper noun, or some form thereof, could instead be a proper adjective simply because it is describing or telling about a noun that follows it in the sentence. For example, the proper noun *Florida* is acting as a proper adjective in the following sentence because it is used to describe the word *sunshine*.

Example:

Almost nothing beats the warmth of Florida sunshine.

In the following sentence, *Florida* is a proper noun, because it is not describing another word.

Example:

My family goes to Florida every summer for vacation.

KINDS OF NOUNS

EXAMPLES OF PROPER NOUNS BY CATEGORY

PEOPLE

Officials President Barack Obama, Mayor Diaz, Officer O’Malley

Historic Figures Benjamin Franklin, Cleopatra, Lewis and Clark

Actors Audrey Hepburn, Tom Hanks, Lucille Ball

Authors Jack London, Shakespeare, O. Henry

Artists Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Georgia O’Keeffe

PLACES

States Oklahoma, Michigan, New Jersey

Restaurants Olive Garden, Red Lobster, Salt Creek Grille

Structures Eiffel Tower, Washington Monument, Empire State Building

Schools Penn State University, Central High School, Trinity Elementary

THINGS

Transportation Delta Airlines, Greyhound, Amtrak

Businesses FedEx, Toys “R” Us, Barnes & Noble

Products Hebrew National hot dogs, Microsoft Word, Pantene shampoo

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced words are proper nouns or proper adjectives in the following sentences.

1. Did you ever see the classic film *2001: A Space Odyssey*?

2. We had a quiet dinner at **Maison d’France** on our first date.

3. This **UPS** tracking code seems to have expired.

4. He hopes to be accepted at **Rutgers University** in **New Jersey** next year.

5. The **Smithsonian Institute** comprises more than 19 museums in the nation’s capital of **Washington, D.C.**

6. A **Degas** painting once sold for over four million dollars at **Sotheby’s**, an auction house in **London**.

7. You can see for miles from the top of the **Statue of Liberty** in New York Harbor.

8. The **French** toast was exceptionally delicious at breakfast this morning.

9. The **French** toast the New Year with the phrase “bonne année!”

Concrete nouns are fairly simple to identify. They’re nouns that appeal to your senses—hearing, touch, taste, smell, and sight. Besides things like an *avalanche*, a *stretch limo*, *newborn kittens*, or a piping hot plate of *barbeque ribs*, things such as *air*, *cells*, *molecules*, and *atoms* are concrete, even though they can’t readily be seen with the naked eye. Got the idea?

Abstract nouns, on the other hand, name ideas, qualities or characteristics, and feelings. Words such as *pride, resentfulness, health, democracy*, and *love* fall into this category. Do you see the difference between the two?

Practice

Identify the boldfaced nouns in the following sentences as either concrete or abstract.

10. The caring **message** written in my get-well **card** was evidence of Kim's **thoughtfulness** and **compassion**.

11. The **globalization** of capitalism has become tremendous in the last **quarter-century** due to improved **technology**.

12. There's a lot to be said for the age-old **adage** "Beauty is in the eye of the **beholder**."

13. His **intuition** told **him** to swerve right in order to avoid the potential **accident**.

Take a look at a list of collective nouns, and you're sure to get a few chuckles. Some are fairly familiar, such as *herd, club, family*, and *committee*. But did you know that a group of oysters is called a *bed*? That a group of butterflies is called a *kaleidoscope*? That a group of islands is called a *chain*? Or that a group of ships is called a *flotilla*?

A collective noun can take either a singular or a plural verb, depending on how it is used in the sentence. Take the word *choir*, for instance. In the sentence

The choir travels to out-of-state performances by bus.

the *choir* is taken as a single unit and therefore takes the singular verb (*the collective group travels*). The following sentence, on the other hand, uses the word *choir* in a plural sense.

The choir are fitted for new robes every three years.

This implies that all the individual choir members are fitted for new robes every three years. While the sentence may sound odd, this must obviously be the case, as *each* individual member wears a robe; the *group* as a single unit doesn't wear a robe.

Practice

Identify the correct verb or pronoun for each collective noun in the following sentences.

14. A dozen roses (is, are) a thoughtful gift for Valentine's Day.

15. A dozen students (is, are) going to the library to study for finals.

16. The class took (its, their) yearly field trip to Camp Arrowhead this past April.

17. The class completed (its, their) exam in American History and did very well.

18. The committee submitted (its, their) findings on the case to the jury.

19. The committee took (its, their) seat(s) to hear the verdict.

TIP

Remember, if a collective noun refers to a whole group, use a singular verb; if the noun refers to the people in the group acting as individuals, use a plural verb. If you're not sure, the general rule is to use the singular. It is almost always acceptable.

KINDS OF NOUNS

Compound nouns can present writers with issues regarding spelling, rather than usage. There are three ways to spell these nouns, which are made up of two or more words. The closed form refers to two words joined without any space between them, such as *bandwagon*, *newspaper*, and *skyscraper*. The open form has a space between several words that create one idea, like *water ski* and *stainless steel*. The hyphenated form uses hyphens (-) between the words, like *mother-in-law* and *do-gooder*.

Be careful to distinguish between words that have different meanings as a word pair or as a compound word.

The following table lists a few of the most commonly confused compound words.

WORD PAIR	MEANING	COMPOUND WORD	MEANING
<i>all ready</i>	completely prepared	<i>already</i>	it happened
<i>all together</i>	as a group	<i>altogether</i>	completely
<i>every one</i>	each individual	<i>everyone</i>	everybody

TIP

Always check the dictionary to find out if a compound word should be hyphenated, since there are not any hard and fast rules. For example, *mini-mart* has a hyphen, while another *mini*-compound, *miniseries*, does not!

Practice

Can you identify the six types of nouns in the following sentences? Identify each boldfaced noun as common, proper, concrete, abstract, collective, or compound. Some nouns may fit into more than one category.

20. Place the **stamp** on the upper right-hand **corner** of the **envelope** addressed to **Phillip Ware**.

21. It seemed as though the long and brutal **snowstorm** was starting to give way, and some **peace** was finally going to ensue.

22. The **army** of **ants** attacked the defenseless **caterpillar** on my front **sidewalk**.

23. Tristan carried a **deck** of cards with him to pass the **time** in between **performances**.

Answers

1. proper noun
2. proper noun
3. proper adjective (*UPS* is modifying *tracking code*)
4. proper noun, proper noun
5. proper noun, proper noun
6. proper adjective (*Degas* is modifying *painting*), proper noun, proper noun
7. proper noun, proper noun
8. proper adjective (*French* is modifying *toast*)
9. proper noun (here, *French* is a proper noun meaning *people from France*, and *toast* is a verb), proper noun
10. concrete, concrete, concrete, abstract, abstract
11. abstract, abstract, concrete, abstract
12. concrete, abstract, concrete, concrete
13. abstract, concrete, concrete
14. is
15. are
16. its
17. their
18. its
19. their
20. **stamp:** common, concrete; **corner:** common, concrete; **envelope:** common, concrete; **Phillip Ware:** proper
21. **snowstorm:** common, concrete; **peace:** common, abstract
22. **army:** common, concrete, collective; **ants:** common, concrete; **caterpillar:** common, concrete; **sidewalk:** common, concrete, compound
23. **Tristan:** proper; **deck:** common, concrete, collective; **time:** common, abstract; **performances:** common, concrete

2



Noun Usage

The plural of tragedy is tragedies, but other than Shakespeare's, why would anyone want to go through more than one?

—Mim Granahan, American actor,
playwright, director (1972–)

LESSON SUMMARY

Pluralize singular nouns, and turn them into possessives with ease—spelling tips included.

Plurals

You can make most, but not all, nouns plural by simply adding *-s* or *-es* to the end of the word, like *printer/printers*, *lunch/lunches*, *bill/bills*, *kiss/kisses*, and *mall/malls*. However, the English language can be tricky. Some nouns change completely as plurals, and others do not change at all. But never fear, there are some rules to help you know how to make a singular noun plural. Read on!

MAKING SINGULAR NOUNS PLURAL

1. Add **-s** to the end of most words to make them plural.

grill/grills, paper/papers, snake/snakes, razor/razors

The plural form of nouns like these, referred to as *count nouns*, is rather predictable.

2. Add **-es** to the end of words ending with **-ch, -s, -sh, -ss, -x, and -z**.

punch/punches, gas/gases, garlic press/garlic presses, brush/brushes, box/boxes, fez/fezes

It would be strange to try and pronounce *dresss* or *crashs* if we didn't put an *e* in front of the *s*, which forms another syllable.

3. Change **-f, -lf, or -fe** at the end of words to **-ves**.

leaf/leaves, half/halves, knife/knives

Be careful; there are exceptions to this rule, for example, *chief/chiefs, giraffe/giraffes*.

4. Change **-y** to **-ies** when the **-y** follows a consonant.

party/parties, battery/batteries, penny/pennies, baby/babies

5. Just add an **-s** after a **-y** when the **-y** is preceded by a vowel.

guy/guys, day/days, play/plays, key/keys, boy/boys

6. Add **-es** to words ending with an **-o** that follows a consonant.

tornado/tornadoes, potato/potatoes, echo/echoes, hero/heroes

7. Simply add **-s** to words ending with an **-o** that follows another vowel.

patio/patios, video/videos, radio/radios

Be careful; there are exceptions to this rule. For example, *banjo/banjos, piano/pianos*.

8. For hyphenated compound nouns, add an **-s** to the word that is changing in number.

passer-by/passers-by, brother-in-law/brothers-in-law

9. There are no rules for pluralizing irregular nouns; you must memorize them.

mouse/mice, deer/deer, child/children, man/men, foot/feet, person/people, stimulus/stimuli, tooth/teeth, octopus/octopi, die/dice, louse/lice, ox/oxen

Practice

Decide whether to add **-s** or **-es** to the end of each word in order to make it plural.

1. book

2. strength

3. bush

4. box

5. package

6. choice

7. edge

8. freedom

9. ogre

10. fox

11. pencil

12. ax

NOUN USAGE

Identify the correct plural for each of the boldfaced words.

13. half	→	halves	halfs
14. chief	→	chieves	chiefs
15. life	→	lifes	lives
16. giraffe	→	giraffes	giraves
17. oaf	→	oafs	oaves
18. shelf	→	shelves	shelfs
19. sniff	→	sniffs	snives
20. wife	→	wives	wifes
21. safe	→	safes	saves
22. wolf	→	wolves	wolfs
23. monkey	→	monkies	monkeys
24. library	→	librarys	libraries
25. candy	→	candies	candys
26. story	→	storys	stories
27. chimney	→	chimneys	chimnies
28. essay	→	essays	essaies
29. daisy	→	daisys	daisies
30. alley	→	alleys	allies
31. delay	→	delaies	delays
32. family	→	families	familyls
33. domino	→	dominoes	dominos

NOUN USAGE

34. radio	→	radioes	radios
35. volcano	→	volcanos	volcanoes
36. tomato	→	tomatoes	tomatos
37. torpedo	→	torpedos	torpedoes
38. hero	→	heroes	heros
39. echo	→	echos	echoes
40. piano	→	pianoes	pianos
41. mosquito	→	mosquitoes	mosquitos
42. silo	→	siloes	silos
43. studio	→	studios	studioes
44. six-year-old	→	sixes-year-old	six-year-olds
45. go-between	→	goes-between	go-betweens
46. editor-in-chief	→	editors-in-chief	editor-in-chiefs
47. runner-up	→	runners-up	runner-ups
48. great-grandmother	→	greats-grandmother	great-grandmothers
49. singer-songwriter	→	singers-songwriter	singer-songwriters
50. sister-in-law	→	sister-in-laws	sisters-in-law
51. city-state	→	cities-state	city-states
52. deer	→	deers	deer
53. woman	→	womans	women
54. goose	→	geese	gooses
55. child	→	childs	children

56. moose	→	mooses	moose
57. mouse	→	mice	mouses
58. alumnus	→	alumnuses	alumni
59. phenomenon	→	phenomena	phenomenons
60. cactus	→	cactuses	cacti
61. analysis	→	analyses	analyses
62. criterion	→	criterias	criteria

TIP

Dictionaries often list two plurals for a word, as with the word *cactus*: plural, *cacti* or *cactuses*. Either is acceptable, but generally, the first one given is preferred.

In other words, the sister “belonged” to the child, the friend “belonged” to the neighbor, and the neighbor “belonged” to me.

Practice

Write the possessive form of the following phrases.

63. the contract of the actor

64. the graduation of Sabrina

65. the price of the car

66. the front door of the house

67. the ball glove of Matt

Plural Possessives

Making a plural noun possessive is a bit different. Most plural nouns end with *-s*, except for irregular nouns (see page 20) like *mouse/mice*, *child/children*, *man/men*, *deer/deer*, and so on. With a regular noun, simply add an apostrophe *after* the *-s* (*s'*), as in *girls/girls'*, *schools/schools'*, or *newspapers/newspapers'*.

Singular Possessives

Possessive nouns are words that imply ownership—something belonging to something else. The first thing to do is determine whether the word being used actually implies possession.

Example:

The *child's* older sister was my *neighbor's* friend's babysitter.

What this sentence tells us is that the older sister of the child was the babysitter of the friend of my neighbor.

Example:

The *districts' administrators' secretaries'* contracts were approved.

This sentence tells us that the contracts of the secretaries of the administrators of the district were approved. In other words, the administrators “belonged” to the district, the secretaries “belonged” to the administrators, and the contracts “belonged” to the secretaries.

Irregular nouns, such as *teeth* or *people*, are treated like singular nouns, and -'s is added to form their possessives.

Example:

The geese's V formation in the sky was impressive as they flew overhead.

Practice

Write the possessive form of the following phrases.

68. the dictionaries of the writers
69. the calendars of the doctors
70. the hills of ants
71. the islands of the countries
72. the toys of the children

TIP

When you are confronted with a singular noun ending in -s, and you need to make it possessive, you can do one of two things: add -'s or add an apostrophe after the -s.

Examples:

Tess's new shoes hurt her feet, but she wore them anyway.

Tess' new shoes hurt her feet, but she wore them anyway.

Some words sound awkward with the added -s at the end (*Moses's*, *Dickens's*, *Williams's*, etc.). It is recommended that you simply add an apostrophe after the -s at the end of such names, but the matter is left to your discretion.

Plurals Formed with 's

What's a rule without an exception? There are a few instances where you may need to use apostrophe -s (-'s) to make a plural. For example, you should add -'s to pluralize an abbreviation that has more than one period, such as *Ph.D.* or *M.D.*

Example:

M.D.'s and *Ph.D.'s* denote doctorates in medicine and philosophy.

Also, when you need to write an expression with words and letters that usually are not seen in the plural form—like *if*, *and*, or *but*, or *P* and *Q*—add -'s to the word or letter.

Example:

There are no if's, and's, or but's about it, she won't be going to the concert tomorrow. She should have minded her P's and Q's and kept her comments to herself.

TIP

You make some single-letter abbreviations plural by doubling the letter: *p* (page)/*pp* (pages), *l* (line)/*ll* (lines). Other abbreviations, like units of measure, do not change to become plural: *1 km* (kilometer)/*10 km* (kilometers), *1 in.* (inch)/*6 in.* (inches).

Answers

- 1.** books
- 2.** strengths
- 3.** bushes
- 4.** boxes
- 5.** packages
- 6.** choices
- 7.** edges
- 8.** freedoms
- 9.** ogres
- 10.** foxes
- 11.** pencils
- 12.** axes
- 13.** halves
- 14.** chiefs
- 15.** lives
- 16.** giraffes
- 17.** oafs
- 18.** shelves
- 19.** sniffs
- 20.** wives
- 21.** safes
- 22.** wolves
- 23.** monkeys
- 24.** libraries
- 25.** candies
- 26.** stories
- 27.** chimneys
- 28.** essays
- 29.** daisies
- 30.** alleys
- 31.** delays
- 32.** families
- 33.** dominoes
- 34.** radios
- 35.** volcanoes
- 36.** tomatoes
- 37.** torpedoes
- 38.** heroes
- 39.** echoes
- 40.** pianos
- 41.** mosquitoes
- 42.** silos
- 43.** studios
- 44.** six-year-olds
- 45.** go-betweens
- 46.** editors-in-chief
- 47.** runners-up
- 48.** great-grandmothers
- 49.** singer-songwriters
- 50.** sisters-in-law
- 51.** city-states
- 52.** deer
- 53.** women
- 54.** geese
- 55.** children
- 56.** moose
- 57.** mice
- 58.** alumni
- 59.** phenomena
- 60.** cacti
- 61.** analyses
- 62.** criteria
- 63.** the actor's contract
- 64.** Sabrina's graduation
- 65.** the car's price
- 66.** the house's front door
- 67.** Matt's ball glove
- 68.** writers' dictionaries
- 69.** doctors' calendars
- 70.** ants' hills
- 71.** countries' islands
- 72.** children's toys

3



Pronouns

We were always together, and were frequently mistaken for twins. We shared everything, and on my birthday, gifts were bestowed on him too; on his, upon me. Each had forgotten the first person singular of the personal pronoun, and not until comparatively late in life did I learn to use “I” and “me” in the place of “we” and “us.”

—Georg Moritz Ebers

German novelist and Egyptologist (1837–1898)

LESSON SUMMARY

A pronoun is more than “a word that takes the place of a noun.” Learn about pronoun categories and cases, and the importance of making them agree in *number, gender, and person*.

Pronouns take the place of, or refer to, a specific noun in a sentence. To use pronouns correctly, make sure they agree in gender, number, and person with the noun they are replacing or referring to (the antecedent, or referent noun).

Gender

The English language has three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. A pronoun's gender tells if it is replacing (or referring to) a masculine, feminine, or neuter noun. To refer to a male, we use *he*, *his*, and *him*; to a female, *she*, *her*, and *hers*; and to animals or things, *it* and *its*.

Examples:

Joseph took Wanda's car to the mechanic.
He took her car to the mechanic.
He took **it** to the mechanic.

In today's society, we are moving away from gender-specific titles and using more inclusive words, such as *police officer*, *fire fighter*, *mail carrier*, and *flight attendant*, rather than *policeman*, *fireman*, *mailman*, and *stewardess*. It is never correct, however, to refer to people as *it*, so the pronouns *he* and *she* must still be used when referring to a particular person.

Number

A pronoun that takes the place of or refers to a singular noun (one person, place, or thing) must be singular as well. The same applies to plural pronouns and nouns.

Examples:

If an **employee** wants to park in the hospital parking lot, then **he or she** must apply for the appropriate tag to do so.
Employees who need to renew **their** parking tags must show **their** current hospital ID cards.

Words like *anybody*, *anyone*, *everybody*, *everyone*, *each*, *neither*, *nobody*, and the like are singular and must take a singular pronoun:

Everybody must have **his** or **her** ID card validated.

To avoid awkward language, it is sometimes better to recast the sentence in the plural:

Employees must have **their** ID cards validated.

Person

English grammar has three "persons": first, second, and third. First-person pronouns like *I*, *me*, *we*, and *us* include the speaker. Second-person pronouns involve only *you*, *your*, and *yours*. Third-person pronouns—*he*, *she*, *it*, *they*, *them*, and so on—include everybody else.

Examples:

I went with **my** family to Yellowstone State Park.
You wouldn't have believed **your** eyes—the scenery was amazing.
 Doug said **he** would take photos with **his** new camera.

Categories and Cases

Pronouns are divided into five categories: personal, demonstrative, relative, indefinite, and interrogative, and four cases: subjective, objective, possessive, and reflexive.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns can refer to the speaker or speakers (first person), or to those being spoken to (second person), or to those who are spoken about (third person). The following table shows the subjective case personal pronouns, which are pronouns used as the subject of a sentence.

SUBJECTIVE CASE PERSONAL PRONOUNS

	FIRST PERSON	SECOND PERSON	THIRD PERSON
Singular	I	you	he, she, it
Plural	we	you	they

PRONOUNS

In a sentence containing a pronoun, the word the pronoun refers to is called the antecedent.

Example:

Trent is a bricklayer. **He** builds homes and buildings.

The antecedent for the pronoun *he* is *Trent*.

Example:

Lydia took **her** to the bank.

Because there is no antecedent mentioned for the pronoun *her*, this sentence is unclear.

Objective case pronouns are used as objects (receivers of action) in a sentence. (See Lesson 11 for more about objects.) The following table shows the objective case personal pronouns.

OBJECTIVE CASE PERSONAL PRONOUNS			
	FIRST PERSON	SECOND PERSON	THIRD PERSON
Singular	me	you	him, her, it
Plural	us	you	them

The following sentences show how objective case pronouns are used.

Please give **me** the envelope to put in the mailbox.

Should I send **him** to boarding school this year or not?

I gave **you** flowers for graduation, remember?

Personal pronouns can also show possession—to whom something belongs. The following table shows the possessive case personal pronouns.

POSSESSIVE CASE PERSONAL PRONOUNS			
	FIRST PERSON	SECOND PERSON	THIRD PERSON
Singular	my, mine	your, yours	his, her, hers, its
Plural	our, ours	your, yours	their, theirs

The following sentences show how possessive case pronouns are used.

This old gray house is **mine**; the new white one over there is **his**.

Hers, around the corner, is getting **its** roof replaced. My roof probably needs replacing soon. **Our** neighbors are getting **their** driveway repaved.

TIP

Remember, *your* is a possessive pronoun and *you're* is a contraction meaning "you are." Try not to confuse the two in your e-mails or other things you're writing!

Lastly, reflexive case pronouns, sometimes called *selfish* pronouns, are used to show a subject performing some kind of action upon itself. Reflexive pronouns can act only as objects in a sentence, never as subjects. The following table shows the reflexive case personal pronouns.

REFLEXIVE CASE PERSONAL PRONOUNS

FIRST PERSON		SECOND PERSON	THIRD PERSON
Singular	myself	yourself	himself, herself, itself
Plural	ourselves	yourselves	themselves

The following sentences show how reflexive pronouns are used. Notice that they are used only as objects.

He cut **himself** on the edge of the can while opening it.

It was obvious they thought of **themselves** as experts.

The computerized car drove **itself** during the demonstration.

Practice

Identify the case of the boldfaced pronouns in each of the sentences.

1. Marcy had obviously forgotten when **her** term report was due.
2. I wore the weirdest vampire costume to the Hal-loween party.
3. “It is really none of my business,” **he** mumbled.
4. **She** likes **their** fruit salad best.
5. It was supposed to rain again; the weather has been dreary lately.
6. Kenneth turned the corner recklessly in **his** new car and scratched **it**.
7. The squirrel balanced **itself** on the tree branch high above **me**.
8. Riley took **his** book and placed it on the table next to **him**.
9. He applied for a credit card online today and **they** approved **him**.
10. Liza had to buy **herself** a new pair of glasses because **her** sister accidentally sat on **them** and broke **them**.

Demonstrative Pronouns

The four demonstrative pronouns—*this, that, these, and those*—refer to things in relation to number and distance. These pronouns can act as a subject or an object, as the following table shows.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Near	this	these
Far	that	those

Demonstrative pronouns look like this in sentences:

This tastes awful, Mom!

I should take **these** and give them to Shelly.

Those are his, not yours.

I want **that** for my collection.

Relative Pronouns

The relative pronouns—*that, which, who, and whom*—relate (or refer back) to another noun that precedes it in the sentence, and introduce clauses that describe earlier nouns or pronouns.

Examples:

I own the boat **that** won the race.

The man **who** drove it is my best friend, Jack.

He is someone on **whom** I rely for skill and expertise.

We have entered into the next race, **which** is on Friday.

Notice that *who* and *whom* refer to a person, while *which* and *that* refer to things. Use *that* to signify information that is necessary (restrictive) to the meaning of the sentence, and *which* to signify information that is discretionary (nonrestrictive), in that even if it is removed, the meaning of the sentence is not altered.

TIP

Here's an easy way to remember whether to use *who* or *whom*: use *who* when you'd use *she* or *he* and *whom* when you'd use *her* or *him*. Examples: *Who* is calling? *She* is. To *whom* should I give the letter? To *him*!

Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to unspecified people, places, or things. Some indefinite pronouns are always singular, some are always plural, and others can be both, depending on what or whom they're referring to. See the following table for the classifications.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS				
SINGULAR			PLURAL	BOTH
another	anyone	no one	both	all
anybody	anything	nobody	few	most
everyone	everybody	one	many	none
everything	nothing	someone	several	some
each	either	somebody		
something				

Here are some examples of how indefinite pronouns are used in sentences.

Both families took their daughters camping in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Each girl brought her journal with her.

All of the campers are expected to keep their sites litter-free.

Examples:

Who put the milk in the freezer?

What is the sum of 12 and 31?

To **whom** does this black jacket belong?

Which direction do I head to get to Spring Lake?

Whose pen is on the floor over there?

When these pronouns are not acting as interrogative pronouns, they also play the roles of relative and personal pronouns in sentences.

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are pronouns that begin questions: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *what*.

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced pronoun is *demonstrative*, *relative*, *indefinite*, or *interrogative*.

- 11.** **No one** is supposed to be going.
- 12.** **That** is the best idea I've heard all day.
- 13.** The supervisor gave **her** the Monroe account **that** needed immediate attention.
- 14.** **Whose** idea was it to paint the deck red?
- 15.** Chris told me that **somebody** saw **someone** on your bike.
- 16.** It was Greg **who** called our house at two o'clock this morning.
- 17.** If **no one** helps **anybody**, then what is the point of continuing?
- 18.** **What** can I say? I planned **this** from the get-go.
- 19.** Ever since last year, **few** have stayed on, except for Charlie.
- 20.** They played the team **that** had a horrible losing streak, and lost.

Answers

- 1.** **her**: possessive
- 2.** **I**: subjective
- 3.** **It**: subjective
- 4.** **She**: subjective; **their**: objective
- 5.** **It**: subjective
- 6.** **his**: possessive; **it**: objective
- 7.** **itself**: reflexive; **me**: objective
- 8.** **his**: possessive; **it**: objective; **him**: objective
- 9.** **He**: subjective; **they**: subjective; **him**: objective
- 10.** **herself**: reflexive; **her**: possessive; **them, them**: objective
- 11.** **No one**: indefinite
- 12.** **That**: demonstrative
- 13.** **that**: relative
- 14.** **Whose**: interrogative
- 15.** **somebody**: indefinite; **someone**: indefinite
- 16.** **who**: relative
- 17.** **no one**: indefinite; **anybody**: indefinite
- 18.** **What**: interrogative; **this**: demonstrative
- 19.** **few**: indefinite
- 20.** **that**: relative

Verbs ➤

4

Verb Types

After the verb “to love,” “to help” is the most beautiful verb in the world.

—Bertha von Suttner, Austrian writer, pacifist, and first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize (1843–1914)

LESSON SUMMARY

Some action and linking verbs look the same. Learn how to tell the difference, and get some help with helping verbs along the way.

Verbs are “doing” words that are a necessary part of any sentence. This chapter covers three types of verbs: action verbs, linking verbs, and helping verbs. As you can tell, they all “do” something!

Action Verbs

Most **action verbs** represent a visible action, one that can be seen with our eyes. For example, *waltz, surf, gallop, chop, row, swing, and punch* are action verbs.

Identifying such *doing words* in a sentence is generally easy. But some action verbs are more difficult to identify because the action is far less obvious, as in *depend, yearn, foresee, understand, consider, require, mean, remember, and suppose*. It is helpful to remember that *mental verbs* are action verbs too, even though they are less visible than the others.

TIP

When compiling a resume, always use strong action verbs to describe your school and work experiences. Words like *developed*, *created*, *improved*, *coached*, *volunteered*, *documented*, and *achieved* catch the eye of a prospective employer.

Practice

Identify the action verbs in the following sentences.

1. I assumed that you would bring your swimsuit because the invitation stated “pool party.”
2. As I walked home, I noticed a box of abandoned kittens on the sidewalk.
3. Many people have the ill-conceived notion that “natural” means pesticide-free.
4. They will close the theater for two weeks while workers install the new seats.
5. Let’s go downtown and spend some time at the museum.
6. Alex’s laptop wouldn’t reboot after the unexpected power surge at the office earlier in the day.
7. Brush corn on the cob with butter and salt, wrap it in heavy-duty aluminum foil, and roast it on the grill for a delicious treat.

Linking Verbs

Unlike the action verb, the **linking verb** expresses a state of being or a condition. Specifically, it links, or connects, a noun with an adjective (a descriptor) or another noun (an identifier) in a sentence.

Example:

Nathan and Sara **are** hardworking students.

The noun **students** identifies or renames the compound subjects, *Nathan and Sara*; *hardworking* is an

adjective describing the noun *students*; and the verb *are* links the two components together.

Example:

Collin **was** tired after his golf game.

The adjective *tired* describes the subject, Collin, and the verb *was* links the two components together.

Some linking verbs can be tricky to identify because they appear to be action verbs. Their job in the sentence is to clarify the condition or state of the noun to which they are connected. The verbs in the following list can act not only as action verbs, but also as linking verbs.

appear	become	feel	grow	look
prove	remain	seem	smell	sound
stay	taste	come	lie	prove
act	turn	fall	get	

How can one tell which role these tricky verbs are playing? Let’s take a look at the word *turned*, used in two different ways.

The Ferris wheel **turned** slowly as it began its initial rotation.

Here, the Ferris wheel performed an action: It *turned*. Can you visualize the huge wheel slowly rotating, with the riders in the cars, as it warms up? The word *turned* here is an action-oriented verb. Let’s look at another example:

One frightened rider **turned** green as the ride began to speed up quickly.

Here, the word *turned* connects the describing word, or adjective—*green*—to the subject—*rider*. In this example, *turned* is acting as a linking verb, not an action verb.

LINKING VERBS

am	is	are	was	were	be	being	been
-----------	-----------	------------	------------	-------------	-----------	--------------	-------------

One easy way to tell whether a verb is an action verb or a linking verb is to replace the verb in question with a verb form of *be* (from the preceding table), or a linking verb like *seemed* or *became*. If the new sentence still makes sense, then you have a linking verb. If the sentence loses its meaning, then you have an action verb. For instance:

The farmer **grew** several prize-winning tomatoes this season.

Let's replace *grew* with *is*:

The farmer **is** several prize-winning tomatoes this season.

Or, let's use the word *seemed*:

The farmer **seemed** several prize-winning tomatoes this season.

Neither choice works, which means that *grew* is an action verb, not a linking verb, in this sentence.

Let's try another example.

The beef stew we had for dinner **tasted** delicious.

This time, let's replace *tasted* with *was*:

The beef stew we had for dinner **was** delicious.

Or, let's use the word *looked*:

The beef stew we had for dinner **looked** delicious.

Both choices make sense, because in this sentence *tasted* is a linking verb, not an action verb.

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced verbs in the following sentences are action or linking verbs.

8. “It **appears** that the only solution to this problem is starting over,” said Trudy.
9. “The group **appears** dismayed at that prospect,” she thought to herself.
10. Dennis was asked to **prove** beyond a shadow of a doubt that the butler did it.
11. There was no doubt in his adversary’s mind that his argument would **prove** faulty.
12. The sign says to **stay** behind the line when viewing the work of art.
13. We **stayed** quiet while the tour guide explained the painting.
14. We **tasted** the orange sherbet and ordered a pint to take home.
15. We decided that it **tasted** delicious.

COMMON HELPING VERBS

am	is	are	was	were	be	do	does	did
have	had	has	may	might	must	shall	will	can
			should	would	could	ought		

Helping Verbs

Helping verbs enhance the main verb's meaning by providing us with more information about its tense.

A main verb may have as many as three helping verbs in front of it in a sentence.

Examples:

Martin **walked** quickly to the bus stop to avoid being late.

Martin **had walked** quickly to the bus stop to avoid being late.

Martin **must have walked** quickly to the bus stop to avoid being late.

A main verb with helping verbs is called a **verb phrase**. It is important to remember that a helping verb need not be right next to the main verb in the sentence. For instance, we could rewrite the last sentence so that the adverb *quickly* separates the helping verbs *must* and *have* from the main verb *walked*.

Example:

Martin **must have** quickly **walked** to the bus stop to avoid being late.

If you were asked to identify the verb phrase, you would eliminate the adverb *quickly* and give *must have walked* as the answer.

The range of a verb phrase is defined as both "the main verb plus its auxiliaries," as previously explained, and "the main verb plus its auxiliaries, its complements, and other modifiers." So some instructors might expect you to identify the previous verb phrase as *must have walked quickly to the bus stop*.

Practice

Identify the verb phrases in the following sentences.

16. We could have driven to the city, but we took the train instead.
17. Nancy would not have thrown the paper away if she had known it was important.
18. William had already read the book twice, so he must have easily discussed it with the teacher.
19. Next time, if you should need help, please feel free to ask. I would be very happy to help.
20. The dealer will go to the flea market to find good antique deals.
21. I didn't realize that she had already gone; otherwise, I would have given her the money earlier.
22. The skier might have won the race had she not gotten her pole stuck in the snow.

Answers

1. assumed, bring, stated
2. walked, noticed
3. means
4. close, install
5. go, spend
6. reboot
7. Brush, wrap, roast
8. action
9. linking
10. action
11. linking
12. action
13. linking
14. action
15. linking
16. could have driven
17. would have thrown, had known
18. had read, must have discussed
19. should need, would be
20. will go
21. did realize, had gone, would have given
22. might have won, had gotten

5



Regular and Irregular Verbs

They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs: they're the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, I can manage the whole lot of them!

—Lewis Carroll, British author, mathematician, and clergyman (1832–1898)

LESSON SUMMARY

Become better acquainted with the pesky past-tense verbs that do not end with -ed, and learn about proper usage with tricky verbs such as *lay/lie* and *sit/set*.

Most, but not all, verbs follow a simple and predictable pattern when expressing past action. These verbs, called **regular verbs**, can be changed from the present tense to the past tense by simply adding *-ed* or *-d*.

Example:

Those musicians **play** jazz well. But last evening, they surprised the crowd and **played** some blues.

Irregular verbs, on the other hand, do not follow any pattern when forming the past tense, so they require memorization.

Example:

“Put the tennis racquets away in the storage bin, please,” said Coach. “I **put** them away already,” replied Kevin.

Here, the irregular verb *put* stays the same whether it is past or present. Some other verbs that follow suit are *cost*, *burst*, *bid*, *cut*, and *set*.

On the following pages, you’ll find a list of common irregular verbs.

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS

COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS		
PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
be	was/were	been
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
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
fly	flew	flown

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS

COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS (CONTINUED)

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
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
lead	led	led
learn	learned/learnt	learned/learnt
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
light	lit	lit
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS

COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS (CONTINUED)

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
mistake	mistook	mistaken
mow	mowed	mowed/mown
pay	paid	paid
proofread	proofread	proofread
put	put	put
quit	quit	quit
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
sew	sewed	sewed/sewn
shake	shook	shaken
shave	shaved	shaved/shaven
shine	shone	shone
shoot	shot	shot
show	Showed	Showed/shown
shrink	shrank	shrunk
shut	shut	shut

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS

COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS (CONTINUED)

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid/slidden
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	speeded/sped	speeded/sped
spend	spent	spent
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
strike	struck	struck/stricken
strive	strove	striven/strived
swear	swore	sworn
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
upset	upset	upset

COMMON IRREGULAR VERBS (CONTINUED)

PRESENT	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
wake	woke	woken
wear	wore	worn
weep	wept	wept
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
write	wrote	written

TIP

If this list seems way too long to memorize, try memorizing three or four words a day and use them somewhere in conversation during the next 24-hour period!

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced verb in the sentence is correct. Make any necessary corrections.

1. Tomorrow, we **will left** early in the morning for the airport.
2. Mr. Brown, our neighbor, **spend** the weekend cleaning his pool.
3. The sun **shine** brightly all day today.

4. I was beginning to **has** second thoughts about quitting.
5. We are **watched** the game from the privacy of the box.
6. For now, we **will head** north, then east.
7. Mom **sewn** me a new set of placemats for the picnic table each summer.
8. When I was little, I was often **mistook** for my twin sister.
9. Yesterday, our band **practiced** at Joe's house.
10. The vegetables for tonight's dinner have already been **cutted**.

Problem Verbs

Conjugating irregular verbs can be a bit challenging. But there are two pairs of irregular verbs that present an additional challenge because they sound alike, even though they do not mean the same thing: *lay/lie* and *set/sit*.

LAY OR LIE			
PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
lay, lays	(am, is, are, was) laying	laid	(have, has) laid

To *lay* means to *place or put* an object somewhere. This object, a noun, must always follow the verb *lay*, making that noun what we call a direct object—the object that directly receives the action from the verb it follows.

Example:

Martin **laid** the blanket on the grass before **laying** the basket of delicious food on it.

PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
lie, lies	(am, is, are, was) lying	lay	(have, has) lain

To *lie* means to *rest or recline* or to *be positioned*. Instead of a noun, a prepositional phrase or an adverb usually follows the verb to complete the sentence or thought.

Example:

The large old oak tree **lies** at the edge of the field.

The cattle **have lain** in its shade for over a century.

In these sentences, the prepositional phrases *at the edge*, *of the field*, *in its shade*, and *for over a century* clarify the writer's thought.

TIP

Lie/lay are intransitive verbs—they don't need to act on anything. You *lie* down now, or, you *lay* down last night. Just you. But *lay/laid* are transitive verbs—they need some object to manipulate. You can *lay a blanket* on the bed—in fact, last night you *laid* one there!

Practice

In each sentence, select the correct form of the verb *lay* or *lie*.

- 11.** Sylvia has (laid, lain) on the sofa all afternoon in despair.

- 12.** The broken bottle (lay, laid) at the side of the road unnoticed.
- 13.** Jason should find his camera (laying, lying) in the back of his closet.
- 14.** The old dog has (lain, laid) on the front porch every day for years.
- 15.** Bianca (lay, laid) her scissors on the counter and picked up the brush.
- 16.** The new bride and her groom (lie, lay) their wedding photos on the table.
- 17.** Grandma complained she had (laid, lain) awake for hours before falling asleep last night.
- 18.** Thom (laid, lain) the racquet on the bench and went to get a cool drink of water.
- 19.** Dad says he is (laying, lying) new carpet in the den next Wednesday.
- 20.** The map shows that the treasure chest is (laying, lying) just below this rock.

REGULAR AND IRREGULAR VERBS

SET OR SIT			
PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
set, sets	(am, is, are, was) setting	set	(have, has) set

To *set* means to *place or put* an object somewhere. Like the verb *lay*, it must be followed by a noun.

Example:

A harried young mother **sets** her groceries on the counter and tends to her crying son. She **has set** a pillow on the sofa for his nap.

PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
sit, sits	(am, is, are, was) sitting	sat	(have, has) sat

To *sit* means to *be situated* or to *be seated or resting*. Like the verb *lie*, it is usually followed by a prepositional phrase or an adverb for further clarification.

Example:

I usually **sit** in the front row of the theater for an unobstructed view of the performance. When I **have sat** further back, I found I could not see the actors well.

Practice

In each sentence, select the correct form of the verb *set* or *sit*.

21. The audience (**set, sat**) patiently as the stage crew changed the scene.

22. My favorite photograph of my cat Milo (**sits, sets**) on my dresser.

23. (**Setting, Sitting**) good examples for younger children is important.

- 24.** I was told to (**set, sit**) my empty glass in the sink.
- 25.** Four students (**set, sat**) their reports on my desk before the due date.
- 26.** Hotel rooms often have a rack to (**set, sit**) your luggage on.
- 27.** There are many trophies (**setting, sitting**) in the case by the front lobby.
- 28.** The owner (**set, sat**) the pool umbrellas around the facility before opening.
- 29.** Jane and Robert are (**setting, sitting**) together at the table chatting.
- 30.** The winding river (**sets, sits**) just at the foot of the hills.

Other Tricky Verbs

Several other verbs need special attention in order to be used correctly.

Most likely, *accept* and *except* are often misused because they sound somewhat alike. Their meanings, however, are very different. To *accept* means to approve, agree, or willingly receive, whereas *except* is really a preposition that means excluding or unless.

Example:

I would **accept** your apology for being late today, but **except** for yesterday, you have been late every day this week.

If you're still confused about whether to *except* or *accept*, remember that when you agree to, or *accept*, something, you are "CC-ing" eye-to-eye with someone; when you make an *exception*, you are "X-cluding" something in that agreement.

Another pair of verbs often confused in ordinary speech is *can* and *may*.

Can means having the ability to do something. When you say *Can I help you?* what you're really asking is whether you *have the ability* to help this person. (Unless you're completely indisposed in some way, the question leads one to wonder why you would ask it in the first place!)

May, on the other hand, means having permission to do something. When you say *May I help you?* you are asking someone to *allow* you to help him or her.

Example:

I **can** help you rake leaves this afternoon only after I finish my other chores. **May** I help you with it tomorrow instead?

The verbs *hang* and *lie* are unusual because they can be either regular or irregular, depending on their meaning in a sentence. If *hang* refers to a thief going to the gallows, then it is a regular verb, and is conjugated *hang, hanged, hanged*. But if it is used in the sense of hanging out with friends or hanging a picture on the wall, then it is an irregular verb, and is conjugated *hang, hung, hung*. Similarly, when *lie* means telling an untruth, it's a regular verb, conjugated *lie, lied, lied*. When it means to recline, it is an irregular verb, which we conjugated earlier in this lesson.

Practice

In each sentence, select the correct verb to complete the sentence.

31. I said I was sorry, but she just wouldn't (*accept, except*) my apology!
32. My brother and I (*hanged, hung*) posters all over town about our yard sale.
33. I loved the movie, (*except, accept*) for the part with the snakes. I really hate snakes!
34. You (*can, may*) have a third helping of mashed potatoes if you like.
35. Without hesitation, the king sentenced the criminal to be (*hung, hanged*).
36. (*Can, May*) the clown walk the tightrope without the umbrella?

Answers

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. incorrect, will leave | 19. laying |
| 2. incorrect, spent | 20. lying |
| 3. incorrect, shone | 21. sat |
| 4. incorrect, have | 22. sits |
| 5. incorrect, watching | 23. Setting |
| 6. correct | 24. set |
| 7. incorrect, sewed | 25. set |
| 8. incorrect, mistaken | 26. set |
| 9. correct | 27. sitting |
| 10. incorrect, cutting | 28. set |
| 11. lain | 29. sitting |
| 12. lay | 30. sits |
| 13. lying | 31. accept |
| 14. lain | 32. hung |
| 15. laid | 33. except |
| 16. lay | 34. may |
| 17. lain | 35. hanged |
| 18. laid | 36. Can |

6



Verb Forms and Tenses

The future is an unknown, but a somewhat predictable unknown. To look to the future we must first look back upon the past. That is where the seeds of the future were planted. I never think of the future. It comes soon enough.

—Albert Einstein, German scientist and recipient of the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics (1879–1955)

LESSON SUMMARY

Since every sentence needs a verb, it is essential to have a basic understanding of the four verb forms so you can use verb tenses properly. This lesson covers not only the four forms, but verb tenses from basic to perfect to progressive!

When we speak and write, verb tenses help our listeners and readers understand when something is happening. The tricky thing is to remember to be consistent with your verb tenses so your audience does not get confused. In order to use verb tenses properly, we need to really understand the differences between the four basic verb forms of the English language.

Verb Forms

Verb forms may look similar to tenses, but they are not. Learning the following basic forms, or principal parts, will help you use correct verb tenses later in this lesson.

Present

The **present** form of a verb is usually the first entry you find in a dictionary (e.g., *care*, *forgive*, *mean*, etc.). Sometimes an *-s* is added to the end of the present form of the verb when it is used in conjunction with a singular noun: *she cares*, *he forgives*, *it means*.

Present Participle

The **present participle** is made by adding the suffix *-ing* to the present form; it is always accompanied by a *be* verb (see Lesson 5), which acts as a helping verb, forming what is called a **verb phrase**: *am caring*, *is forgiving*, *were thinking*. Notice that this verb form expresses action that is ongoing.

Past

The **past** form of a verb shows action or existence that has already taken place at a point in time before now (e.g., *she cared*, *they forgave*, *he thought*). Remember that all regular verbs end in *-ed* in the past tense, whereas irregular verbs end in a variety of ways.

Past Participle

The **past participle** of a verb consists of its past form, accompanied by the helping verb *have*, *has*, or *had* (e.g., *have cared*, *has forgiven*, *had thought*, etc.). This is true of both regular and irregular verbs.

SOME REGULAR VERB FORMS

PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE*	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE**
care, cares	am caring	cared	have cared
yell, yells	are yelling	yelled	have yelled

SOME IRREGULAR VERB FORMS

PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE*	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE**
think, thinks	was thinking	thought	have thought
grow, grows	were growing	grew	has grown

IRREGULAR VERBS WHOSE FORM DOES NOT CHANGE

PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE*	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE**
cost, costs	is costing	cost	has cost
put, puts	am putting	put	have put

*uses **am**, **is**, **are**, **was**, or **were** as helping verb

uses **have, **has**, or **had** as helping verb

Verb Tenses

All verb tenses are formed by utilizing one of the four principal parts of the verb. When we combine these parts with different pronouns, we can see all the different forms that a verb can take in a given tense; this is called **verb conjugation**.

CONJUGATING THE IRREGULAR VERBS BRING AND DO		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
PRESENT TENSE		
First person	I bring, do	we bring, do
Second person	you bring, do	you bring, do
Third person	he, she, it brings, does	they bring, do
PAST TENSE		
First person	I brought, did	we brought, did
Second person	you brought, did	you brought, did
Third person	he, she, it brought, did	they brought, did
FUTURE TENSE		
First person	I will bring, will do	we will bring, will do
Second person	you will bring, will do	you will bring, will do
Third person	he, she, it will bring, will do	they will bring, will do

We are most familiar with three basic tenses:

Present. The present tense shows present action or action that happens on a regular basis.

Example:

He **writes** articles for a local newspaper.

Past. The past tense indicates that the action has already happened.

Example:

He **wrote** several award-winning articles.

Future. The future tense tells us that the action has not yet happened, but will.

Example:

He **will write** an editorial for *Time* this month.

TIP

Use the present tense to discuss what you have read in a book, poem, or other text, even if it was written in the past.

Practice

Choose the correct verb and identify the tense in the following sentences.

1. Jack will (paint, paints, painted) houses in the summer for extra spending money.
2. Yesterday, Anaya's car (break, broke, broken) down on the turnpike.
3. It is advisable that you (carry, carries, carried) your insurance card with you at all times.
4. (Put, Puts) the remainder of the supplies in the storage room down the hall.
5. The load of dirt (cost, costs) him more than anticipated.

In addition to the three basic verb tenses—present, past, and future—a number of tenses more precisely pinpoint the timing or progress of actions.

Present Progressive. The present progressive tense shows action that is currently in progress. The present progressive is formed by combining the present tense of the verb *be* with the present participle of a verb.

Example:

Robert and Olivia **are running** the charity auction at the church.

Past Progressive. The past progressive tense indicates that the action happened at some specific time in the past. The past progressive is formed by combining the past tense of the verb *be* with the present participle of a verb.

Example:

Jennifer **was watching** the lottery drawing on TV last night.

Future Progressive. The future progressive tense denotes that the action is continuous or will occur in the future. The future progressive is formed by combining the future tense of the verb *be* with the present participle of a verb.

Example:

Wanda **will be traveling** to Provence next winter.

Practice

Choose the correct verb and identify its tense in the following sentences.

6. It is likely that the child **was** (run, runs, running) when she slipped and fell.
7. One of the contestants on *American Idol* (**sings**, sang, sung) my favorite Beatles song last night.
8. Our rock band (**play**, played, plays) at dances almost every weekend.
9. Dad and I **will be** (seeing, saw, seen) an L.A. Lakers basketball game next month when we go to California.
10. Joseph **is** (get, got, getting) another opinion from a nearby vet.

Present Perfect. The present perfect tense shows that the action was started in the past and continues up to the present time. The present perfect is formed by combining *have* or *has* with the past participle of a verb.

Example:

People **have used** money as a means of exchange since about 1200 BCE.

Past Perfect. The past perfect tense indicates that the action happened in the past and was completed before some other past action was begun. The past perfect is formed by combining the helping verb *had* with the past participle of a verb.

Example:

Before that, many **had bartered** for the goods they wanted with shells, livestock, and agriculture.

Future Perfect. The future perfect tense tells us that the action will start and finish in the future. The future perfect is formed by combining the helping verbs *will have*, *would have*, or *will have been* with the past participle of a verb.

Example:

As of 2015, the U.S. dollar **will have been used** by its citizens as national currency for about 230 years.

TIP

When you write, pick a verb tense and stick with it. Change tenses only if there is a real change in time. Unnecessary shifts in tense can confuse readers.

Practice

Choose the correct verb and identify the tense in the following sentences.

11. The audience **was** (laugh, laughing, laughed) at the clown in the ring.
12. We **will have** (cover, covers, covered) 3,000 miles on our trip by the time we return home next week.
13. Last week, her doctor (recommended, recommends) that she stay off of her injured ankle for several days.

14. Cheryl **had** (pay, paid, pays) the bill on time.

15. The editor **would have** (reply, replies, replied) to most of the comments by now, but couldn't because he was occupied with other issues.

16. Jeff **was** (hold, held, holding) the flowers behind his back when he approached his wife.

17. The club (enjoy, enjoys, enjoying) the camping trip in Washington each year.

18. His story (become, becoming, became) more convoluted each time he told it.

19. Alice **had** (write, writes, written) many letters before she received a reply.

20. Carla, the librarian, **has** (preview, previews, previewed) many children's books before placing them on the shelves.

TIP

A ghastly grammatical error to avoid is interchanging the words of and have in writing. Consider the term *should've*, as in "I *should've* gone with the blue, not the green." It is a common misconception that *should of*, not "should have," is being said, and it is then written that way. Be careful! The terms *could've* and *would've* (wrongly assumed to be *could of* and *would of*) fall into the same trap.

Answers

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. will paint: future tense | 11. was laughing: past progressive tense |
| 2. broke: past tense | 12. will have covered: future perfect tense |
| 3. carry: present tense | 13. recommended: past tense |
| 4. Put: present tense | 14. had paid: past perfect tense |
| 5. cost: past tense | 15. would have replied: past perfect tense |
| 6. was running: past progressive tense | 16. was holding: past progressive tense |
| 7. sang: past tense | 17. enjoys: present tense |
| 8. plays: present tense | 18. became: past tense |
| 9. will be seeing: future | 19. had written: past perfect tense |
| 10. is getting: present progressive tense | 20. has previewed: present perfect tense |

Modifiers



7

► Adjectives

A man's character may be learned from the adjectives which he habitually uses in conversation.

—Mark Twain, American author and humorist (1835–1910)

LESSON SUMMARY

There's more to this modifier than describing. Learn to identify articles, demonstratives, possessives, and comparatives as well.

Adjectives give a listener or reader more specific information about a noun or pronoun. For instance, if a group of people were asked to think of the word *car*, each person might have a different mental image. That's because the word *car* by itself is too general. But if the words *red* and *convertible* were added, the visual images would be more similar because the car has been described more specifically. An adjective is what we call a **modifier**; it answers any of three specific questions about the noun(s) or pronoun(s) it is modifying: *what kind?* (*friendly, robust, spiky*), *which one(s)?* (*this, that, these, those*), or *how many?* (*nine, few, many, some*).

While adjectives typically come before the noun(s) they are modifying, they may come afterward, too.

Example:

The roller coaster, **large** and **intimidating**, loomed high above all other rides at the park, tantalizing the most daring of park visitors.

Practice

Identify the common adjectives in the following sentences.

1. Carl used his new cell phone to call his younger brother, Mike.
2. The library is a good place to study because it is quiet.
3. Mrs. Franklin was enthusiastic about going to the gym.
4. My fishing pole was shorter than his.
5. A warm wind filled the white sails, and the makeshift raft glided out to sea.
6. After skating on the frozen pond for hours, I was happy to have a steaming cup of hot cocoa.
7. I bought the perfect dress to wear to my cousin's outdoor wedding next month.

TIP

Remember, adjectives paint pictures for a reader or listener. So use colorful adjectives to describe how something or someone looks (*scarlet, tall*), sounds (*noisy, melodic*), feels (*humid, gloomy*), tastes (*bitter, chewy*), or smells (*acrid, pungent*).

Articles

Three words we use in our everyday language—*a*, *an*, and *the*—are special adjectives called **articles**. There are two types of articles: the definite article (*the*), which implies something specific (not just any roadmap but this particular roadmap) and the indefinite article (*a* or *an*), which is nonspecific (pick a roadmap; any one will do).

TIP

Sometimes deciding whether to use *a* or *an* can be tricky. The best way to decide is to use your ears. The word *igloo*, for instance, begins with an initial vowel sound (short *i*), so it takes the indefinite article *an*. The word *ferocious*, on the other hand, begins with an initial consonant sound (*f*), so it takes the indefinite article *a*. But do not let the beginning letter fool you. For instance, although the word *one* begins with a vowel, it has an initial consonant sound (*w*), so it takes *a*, not *an*.

Practice

Correctly place the indefinite article *a* or *an* in front of each word.

8. hour
9. octagon
10. university
11. knife
12. banjo
13. upperclassman
14. honorable man
15. hallway
16. unopened box
17. excellent bargain
18. youth
19. one-way street
20. universal truth
21. quarter-century
22. hose reel

Proper Adjectives

Proper adjectives look like proper nouns because they are capitalized, but they are modifying nouns, and therefore, are adjectives. The phrases *English tea*, *Wilson family*, and *Chinese yo-yo* begin with a proper adjective, each answering the question *what kind?* or *which one?* about the noun it is modifying:

What kind of tea?	English
Which family?	Wilson
What kind of yo-yo?	Chinese

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced word is a proper noun or a proper adjective in the following sentences.

- 23.** The **Italian** flag is red, white, and green.
- 24.** Her father visits **Italy** often.
- 25.** While in **France**, we visited the Louvre.
- 26.** The **French** Louvre is a world-famous art museum.
- 27.** The **Hollywood** director had unparalleled talent.
- 28.** **Hollywood** is part of the city of Los Angeles.

Pronouns as Adjectives

A **pronoun** such as *he*, *she*, or *it* takes the place of a noun. If a noun can play the role of an adjective, so, too, can a pronoun. Some personal pronouns fall into the category of possessive adjectives: *my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *our*, *their*. Take care not to confuse possessive adjectives with the possessive pronouns *mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *theirs*. (You can review pronouns in Lesson 3.) While possessive pronouns can stand

alone, a noun must follow a possessive adjective, which answers *which one?* about that noun.

Examples:

Ronald took **his** *lawnmower* to the repair shop.
Victoria and Charles balanced **their** *checkbook* together.
Sara cleaned **her** *room* until it sparkled.

For comparison, here are a few sentences using possessive pronouns. Notice that here the object does *not* follow the pronoun.

That *lawnmower* is **his**.
Those *checkbooks* are **theirs**.
The clean *room* is **hers**.

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced word is a possessive adjective or a possessive pronoun in the following sentences.

- 29.** **His** flying lesson was scheduled for Friday, July 6.
- 30.** Kyle was relieved that the weekend would be **his** to do what he wanted.
- 31.** My unusual way of playing the guitar fascinated **my** instructor.
- 32.** **Her** memo said that the account would remain **theirs** until further notice.
- 33.** **Ours** floated effortlessly down the stream, a good 50 yards from **his**.
- 34.** Get **your** feet wet first and it'll be downhill from there.
- 35.** This one is **mine**, that one's **yours**.
- 36.** How do you know **its** wing is injured?

Demonstrative Adjectives

Like possessive adjectives, **demonstrative adjectives** (*this, that, these, those*) answer *which one?* about the object, but they always appear *before* the noun being modified.

Examples:

That pool looks so inviting on **this** sweltering day.

This channel always seems to have so many commercials.

These flowers are exceptionally beautiful in **that** vase.

Those shoes are so much more comfortable than **that** pair.

If the word *this, that, these, or those* is not followed by a noun, but is *replacing* a noun in the sentence, it is considered a pronoun.

Examples:

This is broken.

That belongs to Shera.

These are sharp. Be careful.

Those smell rotten.

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced word is a demonstrative adjective or a demonstrative pronoun in the following sentences.

37. **This** is really over the top!

38. I haven't had **this** kind of chili before. It's delicious.

39. Please don't touch **these**, as they are very fragile.

40. **These** figures seem a bit high, but I'll concede.

41. **That** didn't make any sense to me; did it to you?

42. I'll have **that** one on the right, please.

43. What's **that**? I've never seen **that** species before.

44. **That** umbrella is sturdier than **this** one. We should take a couple of **those** instead.

Comparative Adjectives

In the course of writing and speaking, it is often necessary to show how one thing compares to another. We can do this with three different levels of adjectives: the positive degree, the comparative degree, and the superlative degree.

In the positive degree, a simple statement is made about the noun:

This sushi is **good**.

In the comparative degree, a contrast is made between two nouns:

This sushi is good, but that one is **better**.

In the superlative degree, a comparison is made among more than two nouns:

Of all the sushi, this is the **best**.

Here are some rules to remember in forming the comparative or the superlative degree:

Rule 1. Add *-er* and *-est* to most one-syllable adjectives, like *small*, *smaller*, *smallest*; *hot*, *hotter*, *hottest*. Some one-syllable adjectives are irregular, like *good* (*good*, *better*, *best*), *bad* (*bad*, *worse*, *worst*), and *many* (*many*, *more*, *most*).

Rule 2. For adjectives of two or more syllables, use *more* and *most* to enhance the degree, or *less* and *least* to decrease the degree.

Examples:

agreeable: *more agreeable*, *most agreeable*; *less agreeable*, *least agreeable*
spotted: *more spotted*, *most spotted*; *less spotted*, *least spotted*

Of course, there are always exceptions. Here are some two-syllable adjectives that allow you to use *-er* and *-iest* in the comparative degree. Note that the final *-y* is changed to an *-i* before the endings are added.

happy, happier, happiest
picky, pickier, pickiest
silly, sillier, silliest

Lastly, some adjectives just cannot be compared no matter how hard you try; they are called absolute adjectives or incomparables. Consider, for instance, the word *round*. How could something be *rounder* than *round*? Or take the word *unique*: How can anything that is already one-of-a-kind be *more unique*? Other absolute adjectives are *favorite*, *true*, *false*, *perfect*, *square*, *free*, and *complete*.

TIP

A simple tip: Add *more* or *most* before a long adjective—*more frightened*, *more harmonious*, *most ridiculous*, *most delectable*.

Practice

Determine which form of the adjective best completes each of the following sentences.

45. Her (most high, highest) score at bowling was 200.

46. It goes without saying that Roger's hand was (larger, more large) than mine.

47. Jessica was (more good, better) than Jason at solving riddles.

48. This test tube of water is definitely (clearer, clearest) than the other.

49. Tomorrow's weather should be (coolest, cooler) than today's.

50. Compared to Darleen's cats, mine is hardly the (slimmest, slimmer).

51. Mike is (preciser, more precise) than Harrison with measurements.

Answers

- 1.** new, younger
2. good, quiet
3. enthusiastic
4. shorter
5. warm, white, makeshift
6. frozen, happy, steaming, hot
7. perfect, outdoor
8. an
9. an
10. a
11. a
12. a
13. an
14. an
15. a
16. an
17. an
18. a
19. a
20. a
21. a
22. a
23. proper adjective
24. proper noun
25. proper noun
26. proper adjective
27. proper adjective
28. proper noun
29. possessive adjective
30. possessive pronoun
31. possessive adjective, possessive adjective
32. possessive adjective, possessive pronoun
33. possessive pronoun, possessive pronoun
34. possessive adjective
35. possessive pronoun, possessive pronoun
36. possessive adjective
37. demonstrative pronoun
38. demonstrative adjective
39. demonstrative pronoun
40. demonstrative adjective
41. demonstrative pronoun
42. demonstrative adjective
43. demonstrative pronoun, demonstrative adjective
44. demonstrative adjective, demonstrative adjective, demonstrative pronoun
45. highest
46. larger
47. better
48. clearer
49. cooler
50. slimmest
51. more precise

8

► Adverbs

I'm glad you like adverbs. I adore them; they are the only qualifications I really much respect.

—Henry James, American-born English
author and critic (1843–1916)

LESSON SUMMARY

Degrees of comparison can be tricky, as can distinguishing between adjectives and adverbs. Learn which is which, and why.

Adverbs are also called modifiers. Whereas adjectives modify nouns, adverbs most frequently modify verbs. Adverbs can also modify adjectives and even other adverbs.

An adverb answers four specific questions about the word it modifies: *where?* (*here, inside, there, across, out*), *when?* (*never, tomorrow, afterward, before, while*), *how?* (*irritatingly, swiftly, suspiciously, fervently*), and *to what extent?* (*so, very, too, extremely, really*).

Memorizing these questions will help you identify adverbs. You can also look for words that end in *-ly*, as long as you remember that not all such words are adverbs. For example, *friendly, neighborly, costly, ugly, burly, lovely, and cowardly* are adjectives, not adverbs.

The table that follows shows examples of how adverbs are used. For clarification, the adverbs are boldfaced, and the words they modify are underlined.

ADVERBS MODIFY . . .

Verbs	Some trains <u>always</u> <u>run</u> on time.	Margaret <u>answered</u> <u>quickly</u> .
Adjectives	... a <u>really</u> <u>tough</u> professor	... a <u>rather</u> <u>suspicious</u> character.
Other Adverbs	... spoke <u>so</u> <u>eloquently</u>	... argues <u>very</u> <u>effectively</u>

Practice

Identify the common adverbs in the following sentences.

1. I saw a hang glider floating exceptionally high over the canyon today.
2. Someday I plan to travel and sightsee throughout Europe.
3. Taking vitamins daily is one way to stay relatively healthy.
4. The kittens romped playfully around the yard and then slept soundly.
5. The Miller family skis only in the Pocono Mountains during the winter.

Comparative Adverbs

Just as adjectives can show degrees of comparison, so can adverbs, with the words *more*, *most*, *less*, and *least*, and the suffixes *-er* and *-est*. A comparative adverb contrasts two words; a superlative compares three or more. Follow these rules for making adverbs for comparing:

Rule 1. One-syllable adverbs use the *-er* and *-est* endings.

Example:

fast—*faster*—*fastest*

Rule 2. Two-syllable adverbs use *more* and *most* to enhance the degree, or *less* and *least* to decrease the degree.

Examples:

quickly—*more quickly*—*most quickly*
often—*less often*—*least often*

Rule 3. Irregular adverbs do not follow either form.

Examples:

well—*better*—*best*
much—*more*—*most*

TIP

Absolute adverbs—words like *all*, *every*, *completely*, and *entirely*—already refer to everything possible, and therefore cannot be intensified any further. Similarly, *never* and *always*, two extremes of *when*, would be difficult to use in the comparative and superlative.

Practice

Determine which form of the adverb best completes each of the following sentences.

6. I've tried all kinds of glue, and believe me, this is the (strong, stronger, strongest) of them all.
7. This is the (low, lower, lowest) of the two chairs, so it should fit under the table.
8. Your grandmother is the (sweet, sweeter, sweetest) of all the doctor's patients.
9. Writing an old-fashioned letter may take (long, longer, longest), but it is (personal, more personal, personaler) than a simple e-mail.
10. Oscar was (less, lesser, least) grumpy after his nap.

Distinguishing between Adverbs and Adjectives

It is not unusual to encounter words that look like they are one part of speech when, in fact, they are playing the role of another.

Examples:

The bird arrived **early** and caught the worm.
The **early** bird catches the worm.

In the first sentence, *early* is an adverb modifying the verb *arrived*, answering the question *when did the bird arrive?*—*early*. In the second sentence, *early* is an adjective modifying the noun *bird*, answering the question *what kind of bird is it?*—an *early* bird.

The following table gives some examples of adverbs and adjectives that share the same form. The adverbs and adjectives are boldfaced, and the words being modified are underlined.

Some adjectives and adverbs can be a bit troublesome because they appear interchangeable, but are not.

ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES THAT SHARE THE SAME FORM

ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
His <u>bike</u> is fast .	He <u>pedals</u> fast .
The paper contained only a <u>straight</u> <u>line</u> .	You must <u>go</u> straight home.
Close <u>friends</u> are a treasure.	Brian and Theresa <u>sat</u> close together.
Marcia keeps her <u>daily</u> <u>routine</u> simple.	<u>Exercising</u> daily is good for your heart.
Other words that fall into this category are <i>high, late, far, hard, long, low, right, wrong, and wide</i> .	

Good and Well

The word *good* is *always* an adjective. *Good* implies *satisfactory or commendable*.

Examples:

- You did a **good** job as PR rep.
- John is such a **good** map reader.

Well can be an adjective *or* an adverb. As an adverb, it implies *how something is done*.

Examples:

- The team played **well** this season.
- Katelyn can swim freestyle **well**.

As an adjective, *well* is used with a linking verb and usually refers to someone's health.

Examples:

- Julia looked **well** enough to go back to school this morning.
- Our cat seems **well** after the successful surgery.

Bad and Badly

Bad is always an adjective, so it can only modify a noun or a pronoun after a linking verb.

Examples:

- That cough of yours sounds pretty **bad**.
- The cream seems **bad**, so throw it out.

Badly, on the other hand, is an adverb, and can only modify an action verb. It tells *how something is done*.

Examples:

- The clown performs magic **badly**.
- My little brother behaved **badly** at dinner.

Most and Almost

Most can be an adjective when it refers to an amount of something.

Examples:

- Most** cars run solely on gasoline.
- It seems that **most** owners agreed.

Or it can be an adverb used to form the superlative degree of an adjective in a sentence.

Examples:

- They were the **most** surprised.
- This is the **most** intelligent dog I've ever seen.

Almost, on the other hand, is an adverb that modifies the adjectives *every* and *all*, and the adverbs *always* and *never* in a sentence. *Almost* can also be placed before a main verb as an indication of degree.

Examples:

Adjectives	Amy has almost <u>every</u> album the Beatles ever recorded.
Adverbs	Christian ate almost all the ice cream in one sitting.
Verbs	They almost always participate in the annual softball game.
	He almost never leaves without saying good-bye.
	She is almost finished with her painting.

TIP

The word *not* is an adverb that makes a sentence negative. Place the *not* before an action verb. (*He could not paint.*) Place the *not* after a form of *be*. (*We are not lost.*)

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced words in the following sentences are adjectives or adverbs.

- 11.** I have never seen a racehorse run so **fast**.
- 12.** You should act **fast** if you want to take advantage of this **most** generous deal.
- 13.** His **past** behavior is probably a **good** indication of what you can expect this year.
- 14.** The parade moved **past** the judges' table at a fairly consistent pace.
- 15.** Bear left at the fork up ahead and turn **right** at the light.
- 16.** "You're **right**, I didn't realize how **badly** I needed that!" replied Cory.
- 17.** His **wide** grin told me he had something up his sleeve.
- 18.** "Open your mouth **wide** so I can see how **well** your throat is," said Dr. Angart.
- 19.** The **far** side of the table had **almost** every dessert you could imagine.
- 20.** It is too **bad** he has to travel so **far** to find a decent cup of coffee.

Answers

- 1.** exceptionally
- 2.** Someday, throughout
- 3.** daily, relatively
- 4.** playfully, soundly
- 5.** only
- 6.** strongest
- 7.** lower
- 8.** sweetest
- 9.** longer, more personal
- 10.** less
- 11.** adverb
- 12.** adverb, adjective
- 13.** adjective, adjective
- 14.** adverb
- 15.** adverb
- 16.** adjective, adverb
- 17.** adjective
- 18.** adverb, adjective
- 19.** adjective, adverb
- 20.** adjective, adverb

TIP

When you use adverbs correctly, they enhance your writing. But too many can become annoying. Use them only when they are really needed.

9



Prepositions

From now on, ending a sentence with a preposition is something up with which I will not put.

—Winston Churchill, British author
and prime minister (1874–1965)

LESSON SUMMARY

What's an OOP and where are they found? Find out in this lesson.

Like an adverb, a **preposition** conveys a relationship, usually of time (when) or place (where), between certain words in a sentence. A **prepositional phrase** is a small group of words that begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun. The noun or pronoun at the end of the phrase is called the **object of the preposition (OOP)**.

Examples:

across town

beyond the realm of understanding

under the guise of reality

upon your approval

according to the polls

COMMON PREPOSITIONS					
about	above	across	after	against	along
among	around	as	at	before	behind
below	beneath	beside	between	beyond	but
by	concerning	despite	down	during	except
for	from	in	into	like	near
next	of	off	on	onto	out
outside	over	past	since	through	throughout
to	toward	under	underneath	unlike	until
up	upon	with	within	without	

The following compound prepositions are also common:

prior to	next to	on top of	because of	in addition to
in place of	according to	in front of	on account of	aside from

Practice

Identify the prepositional phrases in the following sentences.

- At the park, we tossed breadcrumbs into the water for the baby ducks to eat.
- To get to our house, drive south on Main Street, turn right onto Webster Drive, and park two houses from the corner.
- My dog is so scared of storms that she runs and hides under the sofa or behind my desk whenever it rains.
- Frances found her lost sneakers behind the sofa in the living room.
- The three of us divvied up the remaining containers of chocolate pudding.

Distinguishing between Prepositions and Adverbs

How can you tell if a word is a preposition and not an adverb? If the word begins a prepositional phrase (one

always begins with a preposition)! If it does not, it is an adverb. In the following sentence, *before* is an adverb because it does not begin a phrase; it stands by itself and is not followed by a noun.

I have never seen that person **before**.

But in the following sentence, *before* is a preposition because it is followed by a noun, creating a prepositional phrase.

She stood **before** the judge to make her plea.

TIP

Although a prepositional phrase contains a noun, that noun can never be the subject of the sentence. Prove it: Circle the prepositional phrases in the previous sentence. Whatever noun is left outside the circles is your subject.

TIP

Sometimes you may come across sentences that end with prepositions. Some are grammatically correct, but others are not. You can figure out if the sentence is correct or not by rewording it using the same words. If it makes sense, it is fine. But if it does not, it is grammatically incorrect.

Example:

Crime is something I worry about.

Reworded:

Something I worry about is crime. (Grammatically correct)

Example:

It is a problem I need help with.

Reworded:

A problem I need help with is it. (Grammatically incorrect)

Remedy:

It is a problem with which I need help.

Sometimes it is awkward to reword a sentence that ends with a preposition.

Example:

Indicate which person you are talking about.

Becomes:

Indicate about which person you are talking.

Example:

She brought her brushes to paint with.

Becomes:

She brought her brushes with which to paint.

You may have heard or been taught that a sentence should never end in a preposition. But in modern English, this rule has been relaxed to avoid awkward constructions. Now, the tendency is to use your discretion in such a situation, and go with what feels right.

Practice

Determine whether the boldfaced word is a preposition or an adverb.

6. The couple walked **beside** the river **during** the afternoon.
7. It is important that you be here **before** five.
8. The presentation was done **by** Bret, Tom, and John.
9. Don't forget to set your feelings **aside** and try to be neutral.
10. We are just getting **by** **without** the help of his income.
11. As I told you **before**, it is important that the pool be cleaned regularly.
12. Tad stood **up** and clapped loudly.
13. Run **across** the street and tell your sister to come home **for** dinner.
14. Since last Tuesday, we have eaten **at** the diner three times.
15. The clown spun the plates **around** **on** his finger.

TIP

Prepositional phrases may end with double nouns or pronouns, forming compound OOPs. (*I went to England and France with her and him.*)

Answers

1. At the park, into the water, for the baby ducks
2. To get, to our house, on Main Street, onto Webster Drive, from the corner
3. of storms, under the sofa or behind my desk
4. behind the sofa, in the living room
5. of us, of chocolate pudding
6. **beside:** preposition; **during:** preposition
7. **before:** preposition
8. **by:** preposition
9. **aside:** adverb
10. **by:** adverb; **without:** preposition; **of:** preposition
11. **before:** adverb
12. **up:** adverb
13. **across:** preposition; **for:** preposition
14. **Since:** preposition; **at:** preposition
15. **around:** adverb; **on:** preposition

10



Misplaced Modifiers and Tricky Words

Words differently arranged have a different meaning, and meanings differently arranged have different effects.

—Blaise Pascal, French scientist
and philosopher (1623–1662)

LESSON SUMMARY

Learn to manage those bothersome squinting, split, dangling, and disruptive modifiers that rear their heads when you least expect it.

Misplaced Modifiers

When you write, you transfer what you are thinking—what you want to say—onto paper for someone else to read. You use modifiers to describe words or make their meanings more specific. You know what you mean to say, but your message can become unclear if you have misplaced modifiers: phrases or clauses that slip into the wrong place in your sentences.

There is a simple way to prevent your modifiers from becoming misplaced: Keep them as close as possible to the words they modify.

Dangling Modifiers

A **dangling modifier** does just that: It dangles, and doesn't seem to modify any word in particular.

Examples:

After burning dinner, Russell opened the door in his pajamas to let the smoke out.

After burning dinner in his pajamas, Russell opened the door to let the smoke out.

Both sentences make it sound as though Russell cooked dinner inside his pajamas, burned the dinner, and opened the door to air out his pajamas.

This error is easily corrected by placing the prepositional phrase *in his pajamas* closer to the word it is modifying (*Russell*), and placing the adverb phrase *after burning dinner* later in the sentence.

Corrected:

In his pajamas, Russell opened the door after burning dinner to let the smoke out.

Russell, in his pajamas, opened the door to let the smoke out after he burned dinner.

Squinting Modifiers

A **squinting modifier** is one that's ambiguous because of its placement—it seems to describe something on either side of it.

Example:

Ryan's teacher, Ms. Bennett, told him when he completed his test to pass out some papers for her.

Did Ms. Bennett tell Ryan she wanted him to complete his test before passing out some papers for her? Or had Ryan already finished his test when Ms. Bennett told him to help her pass out papers?

Corrected:

When he completed his test, Ryan's teacher, Ms. Bennett, asked him to pass out some papers. Ryan's teacher, Ms. Bennett, told him he could pass out some papers once he completed his test.

Split Infinitives

Infinitives are *to* verbs, and modifiers do not belong between the two words.

Incorrect: My mom told me **to never lie**.

Corrected: My mom told me never **to lie**.

Disruptive Modifiers

When a modifying clause is improperly placed within a sentence, it disrupts the flow of the words.

Example:

I will not tolerate, just because you're the star, your disrespectful outbursts.

Corrected:

I will not tolerate your disrespectful outbursts just because you're the star.

Managing Your Modifiers

Here are a few rules to help you place modifiers correctly in a sentence.

Rule 1. Place simple adjectives before the nouns they modify.

Example:

Wearing a **green** raincoat, the exhausted student walked home in the rain.

Rule 2. Place adjective phrases and adjective clauses after the nouns being modified.

Example:

The surfer **with long blond hair** rode the ten-foot wave with ease.

Rule 3. Place *only*, *barely*, *just*, and *almost* before the noun or verb being modified. Their placement determines the message in your sentence.

Examples:

Only Peter ran to the store. [No one else but Peter went.]

Peter **only** ran to the store. [He didn't walk.]

Peter ran **only** to the store. [He didn't go anywhere else.]

Peter ran to the **only** store. [There was no other store around but that one.]

Peter ran to the store **only**. [He ran to the store, and did nothing else.]

TIP

The most frequently misplaced modifier is the word **only**. It shows limit or contrast and, as previously shown, placing **only** next to the word it modifies will really clarify what you are trying to say.

Practice

Rewrite each sentence so that the modifiers are properly placed.

1. While fixing the broken lamp, our dog began to bark ferociously.
2. Gladys sang with the choir with a broken leg.

3. Sara played the Sonata in G for her guests on the piano.

4. Covered in sauce, I saw a man barbequing on my bike.

5. Holding hands and admiring the view, the birds chirped and the butterflies fluttered.

Tricky Words

As you've noticed, words in the English language can be tricky. Homonyms, homophones, and homographs remind us that not only should we know how to spell words, but we should know what each word means and which spelling of a word to use!

Homonyms

Homonyms are words that are spelled and pronounced the same, but have different meanings. They are often called "multiple-meaning words."

HOMONYMS

pine	I pine for the pine trees of my native Black Forest.
well	Stacy didn't feel well after drinking the water from the well .

Homophones

Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. The following charts list some familiar sound-alike homophones.

HOMOPHONES

ad/add

I clipped the **ad** in the newspaper.
Add the items up to get the total.

aisle/isle/I'll

The grocery **aisle** was messy and chaotic.
 They bought a small **isle** in the Gulf of Mexico.
I'll show you how to do this.

allowed/aloud

No one is **allowed** in my office without permission.
 I heard him read my name **aloud** today.

ant/aunt

I saw an **ant** carry a crumb up the table leg.
Aunt Myrtle is eccentric.

ate/eight

Dad **ate** a rack of ribs at dinner.
 There are **eight** people in my family.

bare/bear

Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard was **bare**.
Bear hunting is illegal in some states.

blew/blue

Linda **blew** her birthday candles out.
 One **blue** sock was missing.

brake/break

Tap the **brake** gently when stopping in snow.
 Give me a **break**, please.

buy/by

Can you **buy** milk on your way home?
 They quickly ran **by** the store.

cent/scent/sent

One **cent** is called a penny.
 I recognized the **scent** of her perfume immediately.
 Greg **sent** flowers to Dahlia on Mother's Day.

chews/choose

My dog **chews** on almost anything.
 May I **choose** the next game to play?

colonel/kernel

Grandpa Jim was a **colonel** in the Navy.
 Don't bite on the popcorn **kernel**.

dear/deer

She is such a **dear** friend.
Deer roam the woods beside my house.

dew/do/due

The morning **dew** felt cold on my feet.
 I **do** not like licorice.
 The first payment is **due** in four days.

ewe/yew/you

The **ewe** watched her lamb closely.
 A small evergreen called a **yew** is prevalent on most continents.
 I love **you**.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS AND TRICKY WORDS

HOMOPHONES (CONTINUED)

flew/flu/flue They **flew** to Orlando for the first time.
It is not easy to catch the **flu**.
The chimney **flue** was dirty.

flour/flower **Flour** is used to make many desserts.
The **flower** lasted only four days in the vase.

heal/heel/he'll Wounds **heal** at different rates.
Her **heel** hurt after she took her new shoe off.
He'll be the best choice, I think.

hear/here Can you **hear** well?
Here are the apples from the basket.

hole/whole The **hole** they dug was three feet deep.
I can't believe I ate the **whole** sandwich.

hour/our Within the next **hour**, you will see a real difference.
Our friends are moving in September.

knew/new He **knew** better than to do that.
Our **new** neighbors built a deck.

knot/not I tried to untie the **knot** in her shoestring.
They could **not** see because of the fog.

know/no I **know** how to jog backward.
No, he doesn't.

meat/meet The **meat** at her butcher shop is fresh.
Let's **meet** next week to finish this.

need/kneed/knead I **need** a vacation, do you?
Nathan got **kneed** in the side by his opponent.
You must **knead** the bread dough before letting it rise.

one/won Eileen has **one** more hour of work left.
Ashley wished she had **won** the prize.

pair/pear Hillary's **pair** of shoes was two sizes too small.
Baked **pear** is easy to make.

peak/peek/pique We stood at the **peak** of the mountain in awe.
He took a quick **peek** in her shopping bag.
What I overhead **piqued** my curiosity.

principal/principle The **principal** idea is to help others.
It's the **principle** of the matter, and nothing else.

HOMOPHONES (CONTINUED)

rain/reign/rein	Will it rain again tomorrow? King Henry VIII's reign over England lasted 38 years. The horse's rein was worn and needed replacing.
right/rite/write	You're right ; turn right at the light up ahead. The tribe's rite of passage involved marriage. Teachers often ask students to write essays.
sail/sale	Jan will sail in the Caribbean for one week. I bought the living room furniture on sale .
scene/seen	Scene four in the play was the turning point in the plot. I have never seen an octopus before.
stationary/stationery	The guard stood stationary for several hours. The pink stationery had her monogram on it.
there/their/they're	There is a chance that we can go. It took their bus 18 hours to get home. They're supposed to confirm the appointment.
threw/through	The child threw a tantrum in the middle of the store. Through thick and thin, the friends remained loyal.
to/too/two	I will try to change this light bulb with one hand. He plays video games too often. My two sisters look alike.
weather/whether	The weather could be severe, so be cautious. I can't decide whether to stay or leave.
wood/would	Pile the wood by the back of the shed. Would you care to give me a hand?
which/witch	Which sneaker you choose is solely up to you. Dorothy outsmarted the wicked witch in her own castle.
who's/whose	Who's going to Albany with Craig tomorrow? Is this whose coat you thought it would be?

Homographs

Homographs are words that are spelled the same but are pronounced differently and have completely different meanings. Following are some familiar examples.

HOMOGRAPHS

address You should **address** the envelope with the **address** on the label.

bass He is a **bass** fisherman, and also plays the **bass** in a rock band.

bow I was asked to **bow** to the king and remove my **bow** and arrows.

close My manager will **close** up tonight; luckily he lives **close** by.

conflict The reports **conflict** about the recent **conflict** in Congress.

desert The solider did not **desert** his unit stationed in the **desert**.

does He **does** see the **does** standing off to the side of the road.

dove The **dove dove** toward the flock of gulls to defend his mate.

house The **house** around the corner will **house** your dog while you're away.

lead He had finally taken the **lead** in the crossword competition when the **lead** on his pencil broke.

live I **live** next to the arena, so I'll see many **live** concerts.

minute The **minute** I saw her, she hounded me about the most **minute** details on the contract.

number The greater **number** of snow cones I ate, the **number** my tongue became.

present It was an honor to **present** this special **present** to the winner.

produce Many farms **produce produce** during the summer.

read I will **read** the same book you **read** last summer.

record Don't forget to **record** his high-jump **record** in the books.

resume Let's **resume** updating your **resume** tomorrow.

separate **Separate** your socks by color and place them in a **separate** drawer in your dresser.

tear "Don't **tear** my book!" the little girl said with a **tear** in her eye.

use I don't have any **use** for this, so feel free to **use** it!

wind With the **wind** so strong, I couldn't **wind** the string of the kite easily.

wound He **wound** up wrapping his **wound** with gauze.

TIP

Remember to use grammar check as well as spell-check when you write. Spell-check will say this sentence is okay, "The hair hopped down the rode," because those are real words . . . but not the right ones: "The hare hopped down the road."

Practice

Read each set of clues and figure out which words fit the descriptions. Then indicate if the word pairs are homonyms, homophones, or homographs.

6. to move through the air/a pesky insect: homonym/homophone/homograph
7. a fish/a low tone: homonym/homophone/homograph
8. consumed/a number: homonym/homophone/homograph
9. to make/fruits and vegetables: homonym/homophone/homograph
10. permitted/audible: homonym/homophone/homograph
11. small/one-sixtieth of an hour: homonym/homophone/homograph
12. to bend at the waist/a large branch: homonym/homophone/homograph
13. lamp/not heavy: homonym/homophone/homograph
14. also/deuce: homonym/homophone/homograph
15. still/writing paper: homonym/homophone/homograph
16. something in a package/satisfied: homonym/homophone/homograph
17. yeast, water, and flour mass/a female deer: homonym/homophone/homograph
18. next to/to shut: homonym/homophone/homograph
19. correct/a ceremony: homonym/homophone/homograph
20. relax/the remainder: homonym/homophone/homograph
21. to purchase/by means of: homonym/homophone/homograph
22. odor/transmitted: homonym/homophone/homograph
23. jug/ball player: homonym/homophone/homograph
24. guide/heavy metal: homonym/homophone/homograph
25. a brief look/to stimulate: homonym/homophone/homograph

Answers

Answers for questions 1–5 are suggestions. Your answers may vary.

1. While I was fixing the broken lamp, our dog began to bark ferociously.
2. Gladys, who had a broken leg, sang with the choir.
3. Sara played the Sonata in G on the piano for her guests.
4. While riding my bike, I saw a man covered in sauce and barbequing.
5. As we held hands and admired the view, the birds chirped and the butterflies fluttered.
6. fly/fly: homonym
7. bass/bass: homograph
8. ate/eight: homophone
9. produce/produce: homograph

10. allowed/aloud: homophone
11. minute/minute: homograph
12. bow/bough: homophone
13. light/light: homonym
14. too/two: homophone
15. stationary/stationery: homophone
16. content/content: homograph
17. dough/doe: homophone
18. close/close: homograph
19. right/rite: homophone
20. rest/rest: homonym
21. buy/by: homophone
22. scent/sent: homophone
23. pitcher/pitcher: homonym
24. lead/lead: homograph
25. peek/pique: homophone

Sentence Structure



11



Sentence Basics

Certain brief sentences are peerless in their ability to give one the feeling that nothing remains to be said.

—Jean Rostand, French historian and biologist (1894–1977)

LESSON SUMMARY

To be a sentence, a group of words must express a complete idea and include a subject and a verb. Basic sentence structure may sound simple, but it goes far beyond just subjects and verbs. In this lesson, learn what complements are and how they come into play when putting together a good sentence.

The fundamental component of speech and writing, sentences help people communicate their ideas to others. Every complete sentence is made up of two major components: a **subject**—a noun or pronoun that tells *whom* or *what* the sentence is about; and a **predicate**—a verb that tells what the subject is *doing* or what *condition* the subject is in.

Subjects

Finding the subject of a sentence is as simple as asking *who?* or *what?* in relation to the verb. In the following examples, the subject is underlined once and the verb is underlined twice.

A subject can be a proper noun:

S V

Thomas updates his resume regularly.

Who? Thomas; thus, Thomas is the subject.

A subject can be a common noun:

S V

The real estate market fluctuates yearly.

What fluctuates? The market; thus, market is the subject.

A subject can be a pronoun:

S V

They traveled overseas for the meeting.

Who traveled? They did; thus, They is the subject.

A subject can be compound (two or more nouns playing an equal role in the sentence):

S S V

Books and the Internet contain helpful information.

What contain? Books and the Internet; thus, Books and Internet play an equal role as the subject.

Although the subject is typically found at the beginning of the sentence, it can also appear elsewhere.

In the middle:

S V

Before lunch, Michelle decided to run quickly to the bank.

At the end:

V S

At the end of the pier sat the lone fisherman.

Tricky Subjects

Not all sentences have an obvious, or stated, noun or pronoun as a subject; sometimes the subject is implied. Imperative sentences (sentences that make a request or a command) always have an implied subject:

Wash your hands frequently during the day to prevent colds.

If you ask yourself **who** or **what** wash? there is not a noun in the sentence that answers the question. That is because the subject is *implied*; it is the pronoun **you**:

S V

(You) wash your hands frequently during the day to prevent colds.

To find the subject in a question, turn it into a statement that places the subject before the verb:

Did Ed go to the convention in Seattle or not?

becomes:

S V

Ed went to the convention in Seattle.

You can then ask yourself **Who** went? Ed is your subject.

Practice

Identify the simple subject in the following sentences.

1. Yesterday, Mim went to the mall.
2. Several crocodiles were found in the pond at the park.
3. Gail should make an effort to call her grandfather more often.
4. Weren't dachshunds bred for hunting the burrow-dwelling badger?
5. The hammock was his favorite place to relax.
6. I usually park my car in the garage across the street.
7. Keith brought the boat to the island marina.
8. Some raw vegetables taste great in salads.
9. Place some paper clips from the drawer in my desk into the container, please.
10. This new recipe for key lime pie is a success!

Predicates

Predicates tell something about the subject or subjects in a sentence. The verb, known as the **simple predicate**, expresses the action done by or to the subject, or tells about its condition. You can find the simple predicate in a sentence by asking yourself which word indicates action being done by or to the subject or conveys the condition of the subject.

Examples:

S V

She approached her supervisor about her recent performance review.

S

The itinerary for Joseph's business trip

V

was changed.

S V

Meghan was energetic and results-driven.

Like subjects, predicates can be single or compound, which means there are two or more verbs relating to the same subject or compound subject in the sentence.

Examples:

S V V V

At practice, we stretch, run, drill, and
V
scrimmage.

S S V

Last Monday, George and Marty arrived late and
V
ran two extra laps.

Practice

Identify the simple predicate in the following sentences.

11. Many stores were having sales.
12. A jogger spotted the large reptiles lurking in the mud and called the police.
13. After dinner, Grandpa hinted that he had missed hearing all about her travels.
14. Rabbit, raccoon, and fox, also burrow-dwellers, are hunted by dachshunds as well.
15. Phil's hammock was stretched between two large oaks. It was the perfect place for napping.
16. Street-side parking in this congested area is simply out of the question.
17. He rented the 30-foot boat slip for \$210 per month.
18. Common salad vegetables are spinach, carrots, broccoli, cucumber, and tomato.
19. The stapler on the file cabinet might also need refilling.
20. Key limes differ from other limes in their small round shape and acidic taste.

Complements

The purpose of good communication is to get your message across clearly. Sometimes a sentence has a clear message with just a subject and a verb:

Stanley left.
Please be quiet.
What's up?
How are you?

Other sentences may require more information to complete their meaning:

Kyle picked _____.
Gina took _____.

The additional parts that these sentences require are called **complements**.

Examples:

Kyle picked Andrew first.
Gina took a breath.

The complements *Andrew* and *breath* complete the meaning in these sentences by telling us *what* the subjects *picked* and *took*. Complements can include direct objects, indirect objects, predicate nouns, and predicate adjectives.

Direct and Indirect Objects

A **direct object** is a complement in a sentence with an *action verb*. It is a noun or pronoun that “directly” relates to the action verb and receives action from that verb. Direct objects answer **whom?** or **what?** about the action verb.

Examples:

S	V	D.O.	
<u>Kyle</u>	<u>picked</u>	<u>Andrew</u>	first.

Picked whom?
Andrew.

S	V	D.O.	
<u>Gina</u>	<u>took</u>	<u>a breath</u>	Took what? a <i>breath</i>

Like subjects and predicates, direct objects can also be **compound**: One or more verbs share more than one object.

Example:

S	V	
<u>Wanda</u> ,	<u>a successful real estate agent</u> ,	<u>listed</u> and
V	D.O.	D.O.
<u>sold</u>	<u>a house</u>	<u>and a farm</u> this week.

TIP

Every sentence must have a subject, but not every sentence will have an object.

A sentence that has a direct object can also have an **indirect object**. It tells which person or thing is the recipient of the direct object, so you cannot have an indirect object without a direct object. You can easily identify a direct object by asking yourself *to or for whom?* or *to or for what?* after an action verb. Indirect objects are usually placed between the verb and the direct object.

Example:

S	V	I.O.	
<u>The car salesperson</u>	<u>showed</u>	<u>Chris</u>	the latest
		D.O.	
		<u>Mustang GT</u>	<u>model</u> .

Practice

Identify the direct and indirect object (if any) in the following sentences.

21. At a pet store, Mim bought a new collar and water dish for her cat.
22. The wildlife conservation officer captured the reptiles and took them to the local zoo.
23. Gail wrote her grandfather a long and detailed letter instead.

- 24.** Dachshunds find burrows and dens with their keen sense of smell.
- 25.** Phil brought a newspaper with him so he could read, too.
- 26.** Many cars get dents and scratches because other drivers are careless.
- 27.** Sandbar marinas rent residents their slips year round.
- 28.** Chef Williams gave me a delicious recipe for hot bacon dressing.
- 29.** Janine offered the helpful student a piece of candy for his efforts.
- 30.** Columbus brought Hispaniola the key lime in the 1500s.

Predicate Nouns and Predicate Adjectives

Known as **subject complements**, predicate nouns rename the subject, and predicate adjectives describe the subject. They are used in sentences with linking verbs, not action verbs.

When a predicate noun follows a linking verb, the linking verb acts like an equals sign (=):

S	V	P.N.
<u>DeVaughn</u>		<u>is</u> the <u>coach</u> .
means		
DeVaughn = the coach.		

Predicate nouns can also be compound in form, so long as they are identifying the same noun:

S	V	P.N.
<u>Carla</u>		<u>was</u> <u>professor</u> and <u>mentor</u> to many students.
P.N.		

Predicate adjectives also follow a linking verb, describe or modify the subject, and can be compound in form as well:

S	V	P.A.
Following the interview,		<u>Bill</u> <u>felt</u> <u>excited</u> and <u>optimistic</u> .

Remember that *complement* means “add to or complete.” Predicate nouns and predicate adjectives add to or complete an idea to make it more precise or clearer.

Practice

Identify the predicate nouns and predicate adjectives in the following sentences.

- 31.** Mim is the proud owner of a pampered calico cat named Sage.
- 32.** The crocodiles became new members of the reptile exhibit.
- 33.** As a young man, Grandfather was a sailor and traveled the world.
- 34.** Dachshunds are short-legged dogs, sometimes referred to as “wiener dogs” because of their sausage-shaped bodies.
- 35.** Canvas hammocks became popular with the English Navy in the 1600s.
- 36.** Parking spaces in any large city can be difficult to find.
- 37.** Slips are docking spaces for boats.
- 38.** Salads are healthy with the right kind of dressing.
- 39.** Janine is a middle school teacher in Muncie, Indiana.
- 40.** Key limes are popular in drinks, desserts, and marinades.

Answers

1. Mim
2. crocodiles
3. Gail
4. dachshunds
5. hammock
6. I
7. Keith
8. vegetables
9. (you)
10. recipe
11. were having
12. spotted, called
13. hinted
14. are hunted
15. was stretched
16. is
17. rented
18. are
19. might need
20. differ
21. direct object: **collar, water dish**; indirect object: **cat**
22. direct object: **reptiles, them**; indirect object: none
23. direct object: **letter**; indirect object: **grandfather**
24. direct object: **burrows, dens**; indirect object: none
25. direct object: **newspaper**; indirect object: none
26. direct object: **dents, scratches**; indirect object: none
27. direct object: **slips**; indirect object: **residents**
28. direct object: **recipe**; indirect object: **me**
29. direct object: **candy**; indirect object: **student**
30. direct object: **key lime**; indirect object: **Hispaniola**
31. predicate noun: **owner**; predicate adjective: **proud**
32. predicate noun: **members**; predicate adjective: none
33. predicate noun: **sailor**; predicate adjective: none
34. predicate noun: **dogs**; predicate adjective: none
35. predicate noun: none; predicate adjective: **popular**
36. predicate noun: none; predicate adjective: **difficult**
37. predicate noun: **spaces**; predicate adjective: none
38. predicate noun: none; predicate adjective: **healthy**
39. predicate noun: **teacher**; predicate adjective: none
40. predicate noun: none; predicate adjective: **popular**

12

Agreement

*To get the right word in the right place is a rare achievement.
To condense the diffused light of a page of thought into the
luminous flash of a single sentence, is worthy to rank as a
prize composition just by itself.*

—Mark Twain, American author and humorist (1835–1910)

LESSON SUMMARY

Agreement between subjects and verbs and between antecedents and their pronouns is essential. Learn whether to use a singular or plural verb with compound subjects and indefinite pronouns.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subjects and verbs must always be compatible in number and person. A singular subject—referring to only one person, place, or thing—must be coupled with a singular verb. Likewise, plural subjects—referring to more than one—need a plural verb.

Singular:	<i>Shirley wants</i> to buy a new car. <i>Rex usually plays</i> catch with me.	<i>She is shopping</i> for one now. <i>He was not</i> feeling well today.
Plural:	<i>Trish and Dot run</i> errands together. <i>Sandy, Alexa, and I discuss</i> books.	<i>They are</i> at the supermarket. <i>We were</i> hoping to meet today.

Notice the endings of the singular and the plural verbs. Unlike nouns, third-person singular verbs end in *-s*, while the plural verbs do not.

AGREEMENT

Verbs move sentences along. We are able to tell *when* events happen simply by noting the verb tense in a sentence. Because many verbs are easily recognizable, they come across as exceptionally harsh to our ears if used

improperly. This is especially true of the most widely used verb form in the English language, *be*. The following table shows how *be* is conjugated according to number, form, and person (singular/plural, first/second/third person).

SUBJECT		PRESENT	PAST
First/S	I	am	was
Second/S and P	you	are	were
Third/S	he, she, it	is	was
First/P	we	are	were
Third/P	they	are	were

It is interesting to note that the conjugated forms of *be* don't include the word *be* itself. For reference, the nonparticipial forms of *be* are as follows: *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*.

That being said, it is not unusual to hear *be* used improperly as a verb in casual language. Remember this rule: *Be never* follows a subject in a sentence without a helping verb.

Incorrect:

I **be** taking the mail to the post office this morning.
They **be** cooking dinner, and we **be** washing the dishes.

Correct:

I **am** taking the mail to the post office this morning.
They **are** cooking dinner, and we **are** washing the dishes.

Practice

Identify the verb that correctly agrees with the subject in each sentence.

1. Brian (**attend**, **attends**) classes at Rutgers University this semester.
2. Steve and Ed (**borrow**, **borrows**) money all the time and never pay me back.
3. In spring, many children (**fly**, **flies**) kites on windy days.

4. Bill is a real fan and (**watch**, **watches**) every car race on TV.
5. They (**like**, **likes**) to put on a show every year to show off the school's singing and acting talent.

TIP

Do not let long sentences confuse you. Verbs do not have to agree with words that come between the subject and verb. "Jamal, as well as his best friends Alec and Carlos, is auditioning for 'American Idol'." The singular subject, *Jamal*, takes a singular verb, *is*.

Compound Subjects and Verbs

When two or more subjects share the same verb, you have what is called a **compound subject**. The conjunctions *and*, *or*, or *nor* are used to connect compound subjects.

Example:

Pink and black **are** traditional ballet colors.

When *and* is used, the subjects are looked at as equals, so the verb is plural. An exception to this rule is when the subjects are thought of as a single unit, like *spaghetti and meatballs* or *macaroni and cheese*.

When singular subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, each subject is considered a separate unit, so the verb is *singular*. When plural subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb is *plural*, since each of the subjects is plural.

Singular:

Green or yellow squash **is** used in this recipe.

Neither the chair nor the table **has** any scratches.

Plural:

Coaches or managers attend the monthly team meetings.

Neither parents nor spectators have any interest in attending.

TIP

In a sentence with a singular and a plural subject, it may be hard to decide whether to use a singular or a plural verb. But the solution is simple: Whichever subject is mentioned last in the sentence, whether singular or plural, determines the correct verb to use:

Either *pancakes* or *cereal* **is** available for breakfast today.

Either *cereal* or *pancakes* **are** available for breakfast today.

Practice

Identify the verb that correctly completes the following sentences.

6. Neither Bob nor Joe (read, reads) the newspaper in the morning.
7. Janice and Jackie (commute, commutes) to the city by train.
8. Peanut butter and jelly (is, are) my daughter's favorite lunch.
9. Either Danielle or Veronica (is, are) likely to be chosen for first place.
10. Neither spaghetti nor meatballs (is, are) found on the menu.

Pronoun Subjects and Verbs

Indefinite pronouns, such as *everyone*, *both*, *few*, and *all*, are general when referring to people, places, or things. Because we are concerned with subjects and verbs agreeing in number, it is easy to tell if most indefinite pronouns are singular or plural, with only a handful of exceptions.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

SINGULAR			PLURAL	BOTH
anybody	everybody	neither	other	both
anyone	everyone	nobody	somebody	few
anything	everything	no one	someone	many
each	little	nothing	something	others
either	much	one		several
				none

As with any other pronoun, a singular indefinite pronoun takes a singular verb, and a plural one takes a plural verb. When using pronouns that can be both singular and plural, you need to look at the noun

being referred to by the indefinite pronoun to help you determine which verb to use:

Most of these *peaches* **are** bruised.

Most of his *room* **is** clean.

Practice

Identify the verb that will agree with the indefinite pronouns in the following sentences.

11. Nothing (seem, seems) to bother him.
12. Most of the camera equipment (belong, belongs) to Mr. Jackson.
13. Everything in those boxes (go, goes) to the church for its tag sale.

14. Several of the cars (have, has) repairs to be made before inspection.

15. More of these pieces (were, was) found under the chair in the kitchen.

Antecedents and Pronouns

You studied pronouns in Lesson 3, but here are some additional pronouns you need to know.

COMMON ENGLISH PRONOUNS				
all	another	any	anybody	anyone
anything	both	each	either	everybody
everyone	everything	few	he	her
hers	herself	him	himself	his
I	it	its	itself	many
me	mine	my	myself	neither
no one	nobody	none	nothing	one
others	our	ours	ourselves	she
some	somebody	someone	something	that
their	theirs	them	themselves	these
they	this	us	we	what
which	who	whom	whose	you
your	yours	yourself	yourselves	

Without pronouns, communicating would be very contrived because of the necessary repetition of nouns . . .

Example:

Lillian and Gina went to Florida for a long weekend. Lillian and Gina planned to meet up with Lillian and Gina's old friends Stephanie and Jean. Lillian, Gina, Stephanie, and Jean decided Lillian, Gina, Stephanie, and Jean

would have lunch at Lillian, Gina, Stephanie, and Jean's old watering hole. Lillian, Gina, Stephanie, and Jean had a great time and Lillian, Gina, Stephanie, and Jean decided to have lunch there with Lillian, Gina, Stephanie, and Jean again soon.

Luckily, pronouns can take the place of nouns and make a story less boring. The antecedent is the word the pronoun replaces.

Example:

Adel liked the new headphones she bought this afternoon.

The pronoun *she* refers to *Adel*, so *Adel* is the antecedent. Because *Adel* is one girl, *she* is used instead of *they*. There must be agreement of gender, number, and person between an antecedent and its pronoun.

	Singular	Plural
First person:	<i>I, me, my, mine</i>	<i>we, us, our</i>
Second person:	<i>you, your, yours</i>	<i>you, your, yours</i>
Third person:	<i>he, she, it</i>	<i>they, them, their</i>

Let's see why that is not only important, but *necessary*:

Mrs. Parker shopped for a pair of strappy sandals in the perfect shade of chartreuse green and yellow for his new sundress.

It is obvious that *Mrs. Parker* is a female, so the only appropriate possessive pronoun to agree would be *her*, not *his* as in the sentence. Try another:

Rosemarie yawned and put *their* feet up to take *his* afternoon nap.

Rosemarie is tired and wants to take a nap, but the sentence has *her* putting someone else's feet up and, unfortunately, taking someone else's nap for him.

When a sentence has multiple subjects, pronoun ambiguity sets in for listeners or readers. With too many *he*'s, *she*'s, and *they*'s, the message may become garbled, and the audience gets lost.

Example:

Kris told *Nancy* that *Fran* ran into *Hali* after she left class, and over coffee, she spilled the beans that she heard her boyfriend say that he thought she was boring.

That is confusing. Who left class? *Hali*, *Fran*, or *Kris*? Who spilled the beans? *Kris*? Perhaps *Fran* or *Nancy*? And whose boyfriend thinks she's boring?

TIP

A sentence may contain more than one noun/pronoun–verb pair. Make sure that each pair agrees in number.

Practice

Determine which pronoun best fits for pronoun–antecedent agreement in each sentence.

16. Geoff and Hank took _____ break in the lobby.

17. Everybody went to _____ tent after the bonfire.

18. Vivian reached _____ hand across the table to shake Jim's hand.

19. Both drivers checked _____ engines before approaching the starting line.

20. The bird flew to _____ nest high in the tree-top.

Answers

- 1.** attends
- 2.** borrow
- 3.** fly
- 4.** watches
- 5.** like
- 6.** reads
- 7.** commute
- 8.** is
- 9.** is
- 10.** are

- 11.** seems
- 12.** belongs
- 13.** goes
- 14.** have
- 15.** were
- 16.** their
- 17.** his or her
- 18.** her
- 19.** their
- 20.** its

13 ➤ Phrases

The government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

—Ronald Reagan, U.S. Republican politician
and president (1911-2004)

LESSON SUMMARY

Did you know that in a sentence, a little group of words can wear many hats? Well, it can. In one sentence, it may act like an adjective; in another, it may be like an adverb; and in still another, it may function as a noun. Find out how all this happens in this lesson.

A phrase is a group of two or more words that makes sense, but not complete sense, because it does not have both a subject and a verb. The group of words that make up a phrase—and there are many kinds of phrases—is used as a single part of speech.

SAMPLE PHRASES

NO PREDICATE	NO SUBJECT
The bicycles	goes skating often
Several	is from another planet
Our house	are missing some parts

Prepositional Phrases

The **prepositional phrase** is the most common type of phrase. (For a review of prepositions, see Lesson 9.) In a sentence, a prepositional phrase can play the role of an adjective, in which case it is called an adjective phrase, or an adverb, in which case, it is an adverb phrase. There are also verbal phrases (based on verbs) that can be participial phrases, gerund phrases, or infinitive phrases, and can function as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. Lastly, appositive phrases explain or give more detail about the word or words they modify.

Adjective and Adverb Phrases

A prepositional phrase, which begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun, can function like an adjective or adverb in a sentence. Like an adjective, an adjective phrase answers *what kind?* or *which one?* about the noun or pronoun it modifies. Unlike an adjective, which typically precedes the noun it modifies, the adjective phrase generally comes after the noun.

Example:

A group of friends **from work** are meeting tonight for dinner.

Here, the prepositional phrase *from work* acts like an adjective. We know it is an adjective phrase because it modifies the noun *group* and answers the question *which one?* about the group.

Adverb phrases modify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. An adverb phrase answers *where?* *when?* *how?* or *to what extent?* about the word it modifies, and usually provides more detail than a typical adverb.

Example:

We will meet **at our favorite restaurant at six o'clock**.

Here, the prepositional phrases *at our favorite restaurant* and *at six o'clock* act like adverbs, modifying the verb *meet* and answering the questions *where?* and *when?* about the meeting.

TIP

Remember, a phrase is just a group words. It may be a subject or a predicate, but it cannot be both. Therefore, it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Practice

Identify the adjective and adverb phrases in the following sentences.

1. Forests with dry grass and brush burn easily.
2. The workers on the platform worked hard in the hot sun.
3. The picture in the antique frame was of my grandmother.
4. The gray squirrels scampered along the fence rail in the backyard.
5. The divers traversed through deep waters of the Caribbean.

Verbal Phrases

The three types of verbal phrases are participial phrases—which act like adjectives—and gerund phrases and infinitive phrases—which act like nouns.

Participial Phrases

Participial phrases begin with a participle—a present tense (-ing) verb or a past tense (-ed, -en, -t, or -n) verb. These phrases act like adjectives, describing or giving more detail about nouns or pronouns.

Examples:

Looking hot and tired, the gardener sat in the shade of a nearby tree.

Shaken by the unexpected accident, Harry called 911 for assistance.

The present participle *looking* (*look + ing*) modifies the noun *gardener*. The words *hot* and *tired* complete the participial phrase. The phrase *Shaken by the unexpected accident* follows the same configuration, except it is in past participle (*shake + n*) form.

Infinitive Phrases

Infinitive phrases begin with the word *to* plus a verb. These phrases act like nouns, adjectives, or adverbs, depending on their function in the sentence.

Example:

To run a mile in less than six minutes was Tommy's aim this season.

The infinitive phrase *to run a mile in less than six minutes* is functioning as a noun because it is the complete subject of the sentence.

Example:

Tommy aims **to run a mile in less than six minutes** this season.

In this sentence, *to run a mile in less than six minutes* also functions as a noun because it is the direct object of the verb *aims*.

Example:

To run a mile in less than six minutes, Tommy trains hard this season.

Here, *to run a mile in less than six minutes* functions as an *adjective* because it modifies the noun *Tommy*.

Example:

Tommy is training this season **to run a mile in less than six minutes**.

Now, *to run a mile in less than six minutes* functions as an *adverb* modifying the verb *training*.

Gerund Phrases

Gerund phrases begin with a gerund—an *-ing* verb acting as a noun. Gerund phrases always work like a noun in a sentence, so they can function as either subjects or objects.

Example:

Tasting chocolate for a living can be a delicious yet fattening profession.

The gerund phrase *tasting chocolate for a living* functions as a noun and is the complete subject of the sentence.

Example:

Debbie's profession is **sampling chocolate**.

The gerund phrase *sampling chocolate* functions as a noun and is the subject complement of the linking verb *is* and the subject *profession*.

Example:

Debbie enjoys **working with chocolate**.

The gerund phrase *working with chocolate* functions as a noun and is the direct object of the verb *enjoys*.

Practice

Identify the types of phrases that are italicized in the following sentences.

6. *To conclude tonight's program*, our chief of staff would like to say a few words.
7. *Wanting to save money*, Lysbeth spent the morning clipping and filing coupons.
8. Marybeth dreams about *becoming a NASA astronaut*.
9. The plumber was unable *to finish the difficult job* in one day.
10. *Excusing the boys* for their rude and reckless behavior was not an option.

Appositive Phrases

An **appositive phrase** renames, identifies, or gives more detail about a noun or pronoun that it follows in a sentence.

Example:

My brother, **a clown by profession**, works all weekend at parties and gatherings.

In this sentence, the noun *brother* is being further identified by the appositive phrase *a clown by profession*.

TIP

Since it tells more about a noun, you can omit an appositive phrase without losing the basic idea of a sentence. In the previous sentence, drop the phrase and you still know the brother works weekends at social gatherings.

Practice

Identify the appositive phrases in each sentence and the noun or pronoun it modifies.

- 11.** Julie, an excellent tennis player, will be going to the state finals for the Junior American Tennis Association this August.
- 12.** The peanut, not really a nut but a legume, is a major allergen for children and adults around the world.
- 13.** *Pygmalion* is by George Bernard Shaw, one of my favorite playwrights.
- 14.** To play the marimba, a musical instrument in the percussion family, Carlo used small wooden mallets.
- 15.** Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians*, a classic mystery, was first published in the United States in 1940.

Answers

- 1.** **with dry grass and brush:** adjective phrase
- 2.** **on the platform:** adjective phrase; **in the hot sun:** adverb phrase
- 3.** **in the antique frame, of my grandmother:** adjective phrases
- 4.** **along the fence rail, in the backyard:** adverb phrases
- 5.** **through deep waters, of the Caribbean:** adverb phrases
- 6.** infinitive phrase
- 7.** participial phrase
- 8.** gerund phrase
- 9.** infinitive phrase
- 10.** gerund phrase
- 11.** **an excellent tennis player** modifies *Julie*
- 12.** **not really a nut but a legume** modifies *peanut*
- 13.** **one of my favorite playwrights** modifies
George Bernard Shaw
- 14.** **a musical instrument in the percussion family**
modifies *marimba*
- 15.** **a classic mystery** modifies *Ten Little Indians*

14 ➤ Clauses

The most emphatic place in a clause or sentence is the end. This is the climax; and, during the momentary pause that follows, that last word continues, as it were, to reverberate in the reader's mind. It has, in fact, the last word.

—Frank Laurence Lucas, English literary critic,
poet, novelist, and playwright (1894–1967)

LESSON SUMMARY

Like phrases, clauses are parts of speech that can take on many different jobs—they can even function as stand-alone sentences. Find out why and how in this lesson.

A clause is also a group of words, but it differs from a phrase in that it has its own subject and verb. Therefore, some clauses function as sentences, either independently or within a larger sentence. One sentence might contain, or even be entirely composed of, as many as three or more clauses. The sentence would be a combination of two possible kinds of clauses, **independent** and **subordinate**.

TIP

Too many simple sentences can make your conversation or writing choppy and dull. Increase listener/reader interest by adding a few clauses that supply new facts or vivid descriptions.

Independent Clauses

Sometimes referred to as a main clause, an **independent clause** can stand alone as a simple sentence.

Examples:

You have a nice smile.
It lights up your eyes.

With the help of a semicolon or a coordinating conjunction, we can join these two independent clauses to form a single sentence.

Examples:

You have a nice smile; it lights up your eyes.
You have a nice smile, **and** it lights up your eyes.

Don't confuse the comma with the semicolon. Joining the two clauses with a comma instead of a semicolon would result in what is called a comma splice. (See Lesson 18.)

Examples:

I looked for my lost address book, **but** I could not find it.

Charlotte watered the tree every day, **for** it was new.

Hans wanted to learn to play golf, **so** he took lessons.

As mentioned before, some sentences may contain as many as three or more independent clauses.

Example:

I looked for my lost address book, **but** I could not find it, **so** I decided to start a new one; I knew it would be useful.

Subordinate Clauses

A **subordinate clause**, or dependent clause, also contains a subject and verb, but it cannot stand alone as a simple sentence. It depends on another clause in the sentence to help it do its job. Subordinate clauses look like independent clauses but they can begin with subordinating conjunctions.

Examples:

before I knew it
so I don't forget it
whenever you're in town

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

after	although	as if	as long as	as much as
because	before	even if	even though	if
in order that	now that	only if	since	so
so long as	though	unless	until	when
whenever	whereas	whether	while	where

Subordinate clauses can also begin with relative pronouns.

Examples:

whom I saw earlier
whose name I forgot
whichever comes first

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

that	which	whichever	who
whoever	whose	whom	whomever

When attaching a subordinate clause to the front of a main, or independent, clause, it is necessary to use a comma between the two clauses.

Example:

Before I knew it, I was being lambasted by the angry sergeant for my comment.

When attaching a clause to the end of a main clause, no comma is needed.

Example:

Put your name and number on the card **so I don't forget it.**

Practice

Determine whether the group of words is an independent or a subordinate clause.

1. It seemed like yesterday
2. Despite the fact you knew
3. If we could just see eye to eye
4. Wherever he might go
5. Before we leave
6. Suppose he changes his mind
7. Because we were only a mile from home

8. Andrew went fishing

9. When Justin took his first swing

10. So long as we remain in the boat

Subordinate clauses can function as three different parts of speech: a *noun*, an *adjective*, or an *adverb*.

Noun Clauses

We know that nouns can play many roles. They can be subjects, predicate nominatives, direct objects, appositives, indirect objects, or objects of prepositions. Some words that begin noun clauses are question-starters like *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how*, as well as the words *that*, *whether*, *whom*, *whoever*, and *whomever*.

Example:

I see Robin.

Here, the proper noun *Robin* is the direct object of *see*.

Example:

I see that Robin finished three books already.

The noun clause *that Robin finished three books already* functions as the direct object of the verb *see*.

Example:

Charles, a local hero, received an award.

The phrase *a local hero* is an appositive phrase that modifies the noun *Charles*.

Example:

Charles, who is a local hero, received an award.

The phrase *who is a local hero* is a noun phrase functioning as an appositive.

Practice

Identify the noun clause in each of the following sentences.

- 11.** I don't understand what he sees in this.
- 12.** Phyllis's suggestion that we go through the Blue Ridge Mountains was a good one.
- 13.** James was wondering what Wednesday's lineup is going to be.
- 14.** Our intention is that we be able to visit the Eiffel Tower on our way through Paris.
- 15.** Why you decided to switch careers this late in the game is hard to comprehend.
- 16.** Hugh says he has no idea where he is going to sleep.
- 17.** Whether Ursula goes to college is a concern of mine.
- 18.** That we leave before five in the morning was her idea, not his.
- 19.** You should know where your watch is.
- 20.** The commendation goes to whoever accomplishes the tasks in a timely manner.

Adjective Clauses

Subordinate clauses function as adjectives when they describe or modify nouns or pronouns. Like adjectives, they answer the questions *what kind?* and *which one?* about the words they modify. An **adjective clause** begins with the relative pronoun *who*, *whose*, *whom*, *that*, or *which*, or the subordinating conjunction *where* or *when*.

Example:

The painting, which had a price tag of \$10,000, was too expensive.

The adjective clause *which had a price tag of \$10,000* is modifying the noun *painting*.

Example:

The man who witnessed the robbery was later interviewed by the newspaper.

The adjective clause *who witnessed the robbery* modifies the noun *man*.

Practice

Identify the adjective clause in each sentence.

- 21.** Did you spill the glass of milk that was in the refrigerator?
- 22.** The police are searching for the person who lives in this apartment.
- 23.** The room on your left is where the supervisor works.
- 24.** Do you remember when you fell and sprained your wrist?
- 25.** I want to go on a ride that is fast, like a roller coaster.
- 26.** I am sure it was the car whose taillight was broken.

- 27.** This document is a piece of evidence that is important.
- 28.** The acting class that I take every Thursday has been cancelled.
- 29.** My cousin, who lives in Oklahoma, is going to Europe with us.
- 30.** There is a fragrant lilac bush that grows outside my window.

Adverb Clauses

When a subordinate clause answers *where*, *when*, *how*, or *why*, it is functioning as an adverb, and is called an **adverb clause**. Like other adverbs, the adverb clause answers *where?* *when?* *why?* and *how?* about the verb, adjective, or other adverb it modifies. Adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions such as *because*, *although*, *once*, *until*, and *after*, to name a few.

Example:

As he set the cup down, coffee spilled all over his shoe.

The adverb clause *as he set the cup down* modifies the verb *spilled*.

Example:

Allison played the piano longer than David did.

The adverb clause *than David did* modifies the adverb *longer*.

TIP

Because adverb clauses tell why something in the main clause happened, you will find them in cause-and-effect text and questions on tests. And since adverb clauses show differences, they are also used in compare-and-contrast items.

Practice

Identify the adverb clause in each of the following sentences.

- 31.** Because the book was old, it was kept behind glass.
- 32.** This dining room set is yours provided that your payment goes through.
- 33.** Mark is not allowed to leave even if he insists on going.
- 34.** I was ready to go before the sun was up.
- 35.** He acted as if he belonged there.
- 36.** I enjoyed the reunion although there was some tension between Mom and Aunt Joy.
- 37.** Tad could not reach the top shelf even though he used a stepladder.
- 38.** The baby starts to cry whenever I step out of the room.
- 39.** After we have breakfast, we'll go to the flea market.
- 40.** If you don't mind, put this away in the closet for me.

Answers

1. independent clause
2. subordinate clause
3. subordinate clause
4. subordinate clause
5. subordinate clause
6. independent clause
7. subordinate clause
8. independent clause
9. subordinate clause
10. subordinate clause
11. what he sees in this
12. that we go through the Blue Ridge Mountains
13. what Wednesday's lineup is going to be
14. that we be able to visit the Eiffel Tower
15. Why you decided to switch careers
16. where he is going to sleep
17. Whether Ursula goes to college
18. That we leave before five in the morning
19. where your watch is
20. whoever accomplishes the tasks
21. that was in the refrigerator
22. who lives in this apartment
23. where the supervisor works
24. when you fell and sprained your wrist
25. that is fast
26. whose taillight was broken
27. that is important
28. that I take every Thursday
29. who lives in Oklahoma
30. that grows outside my window
31. Because the book was old
32. provided that your payment goes through
33. even if he insists on going
34. before the sun was up
35. as if he belonged there
36. although there was some tension
37. even though he used a stepladder
38. whenever I step out of the room
39. After we have breakfast
40. If you don't mind

15



Conjunctions

First, it [clarity] involves the use of normal words, secondly the use of connectives. Sentences which are unconnected and disjointed throughout are always unclear. For the beginning of each clause is obscured by the lack of connectives

—Demetrius of Phaleron, Greek orator, statesman,
and teacher of rhetoric (350 BCE–280 BCE)

LESSON SUMMARY

When you write, does it matter if your connectors are *correlative*, *coordinating*, or *subordinating*? Does it matter if the elements being connected are similar? Find out here.

Conjunctions are connecting words. They join words, phrases, and sentences in writing and speech. Conjunctions come in three forms: coordinating, correlative, and subordinating. Coordinating and correlative conjunctions connect similar elements: nouns with nouns, phrases with phrases, sentences with sentences. Subordinating conjunctions connect elements that are dissimilar.

TIP

Some people think it is wrong to start a sentence with a conjunction like *and*, *but*, or *so*. Today, it is perfectly acceptable and helps to add emphasis. Just do not overdo it.

Coordinating Conjunctions

The acronym FANBOYS will help you remember the seven, and *only* seven, coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so*.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

for	expresses a logical relationship, where one element is the cause of another
Connecting sentences:	Alice sold her condominium, for she wanted a house.
and	joins elements that are equal in importance
Connecting phrases:	June vacuumed the floors and dusted the furniture.
nor	presents an alternate idea or thought
Connecting words:	He was so nervous he could neither eat nor sleep.
but	indicates a difference or exception between elements
Connecting words:	Their vacation was short but enjoyable.
or	presents an alternative or option for an element of equal importance
Connecting words:	You can have juice or soda with your meal.
yet	joins elements that follow logically but are opposing
Connecting phrases:	She is so glamorous yet down to earth.
so	suggests the consequence of related ideas
Connecting sentences:	Marge cut the grass yesterday, so she got to relax today.

Practice

In each of the following sentences, identify the co-ordinating conjunction and the word or group of words it is connecting.

1. The litter of puppies was calm **yet** noisy when I peered into the crate.
2. You **or** I should make sure the smoke alarm batteries are changed.
3. We took the local roads to the city **for** we knew the expressway would have traffic.
4. The dancer moved with great fluidity **yet** without passion.

5. Ken and Rona arrived early **so** they could get good seats for the symphony.
6. Rhonda wanted to go back to finish her degree in nursing, **so** she freed up three evenings a week for her classes.
7. Last week's weather was rainy, **but** the forecast is calling for sunny skies this week.
8. He shivered, **for** the pool water was cold.
9. For lunch you need a sandwich **or** salad, not just junk food.
10. The hikers were tired **but** eager to move on.

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions come in pairs and are used as such. They connect sentence elements of similar structure and importance. There are five common pairs of correlative conjunctions.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

both . . . and

Both Kelly and Ingrid attended the cooking demonstration.

either . . . or

Either you let him go or I'm calling the police.

neither . . . nor

I can neither go shopping nor go to the movies because the mall is closed.

not only . . . but also

We spent not only the summer but also the fall in Alaska.

whether . . . or

Sometimes I don't know whether Lynn or Jill should take the lead.

Practice

Insert acceptable correlative conjunctions into the following sentences.

11. She has _____ six _____ seven years of service with us.

12. _____ Stanley _____ Josh play drums.

13. _____ you decide on the red _____ choose the blue makes no difference to me.

14. Caroline _____ forgot where Matt lives, _____ lost his cell phone number.

15. _____ Holly will have to try harder _____ she will have to move down to a different level.

16. This lemon chiffon pie is _____ creamy _____ low-calorie.

17. _____ you call the hall to make the arrangements _____ you risk losing your \$100 deposit.

18. It is unclear _____ the cable bill will come on time _____ I will have to go to the office to pay it.

19. The fee includes _____ drinks _____ gratuity at this establishment.

20. At the birthday party, Kim served _____ barbecued ribs _____ steak.

TIP

As you read, you may find that *whether* is used without its pair-mate, which can be okay. For example, "I'm not sure *whether* I can go with you." Here, the other half of the pair is implied: "I'm not sure *whether* (or *not*) I can go with you."

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions connect an independent clause to a dependent, or subordinate, clause. For a

review of clauses, see Lesson 14. The subordinating conjunction expresses the relationship between the meanings of the independent and dependent clauses.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS			
TIME	CAUSE/EFFECT	CONDITION	CONTRAST
after	because	as long as	although
before	so	unless	even though
when	now that	provided that	though
since	in order that	so long as	as much as
until	as if	if	while
as soon as		whether	whereas
whenever			even if

The preceding table shows some commonly used subordinating conjunctions and some relationships they convey. The logic of their use lies in the relationship of the dependent and subordinate clauses. For example, in the sentence

The program will have to be discontinued unless more interest is generated.

the clause *unless more interest is generated* cannot stand alone because its meaning depends on the independent clause *The program will have to be discontinued*.

TIP

Think you're seeing things? You're not; many subordinating conjunctions previously shown are also listed as prepositions in Lesson 9. Don't forget—words can play many different roles in a sentence! For example, depending on its function, the word since can play three roles.

It can be an adverb:

He's been over there since.

or a preposition:

I haven't had fresh pineapple since my trip to Hawaii.

or a conjunction:

We haven't been to the beach since the weather been so unpleasant all summer.

Practice

Using the table on page 110 for reference, create a new sentence with the clauses and a subordinating conjunction.

21. Soccer is becoming popular. Baseball is all the rage.

22. The sailboat was stranded. There was not enough wind.

23. Louise will sleep soundly. Her alarm clock has gone off.

24. The horse won't get out of its stall. You lock the door.

25. Dr. Kroger has high expectations of his students. They work hard.

Answers

1. calm **yet** noisy

2. You **or** I

3. We took the local roads to the city **for** we knew the expressway would have traffic.

4. with great fluidity **yet** without passion

5. Ken and Rona arrived early **so** they could get good seats for the symphony.

6. Rhonda wanted to go back to finish her degree in nursing, **so** she freed up three evenings a week for her classes.

7. Last week's weather was rainy, **but** the forecast is calling for sunny skies this week.

8. He shivered, **for** the pool water was cold.

9. sandwich **or** salad

10. tired **but** eager

11. either . . . or

12. Both . . . and

13. Whether . . . or

14. either . . . or; neither . . . nor; both . . . and

15. Either . . . or

16. both . . . and; neither . . . nor

17. Either . . . or

18. whether . . . or

19. neither . . . nor; either . . . or; both . . . and

20. both . . . and; neither . . . nor; either . . . or

21. *Now that* soccer is becoming popular, baseball is all the rage.

Even though soccer is becoming popular, baseball is all the rage.

Even though baseball is all the rage, soccer is becoming popular.

22. The sailboat was stranded *because* there was not enough wind.

Because there was not enough wind, the sailboat was stranded.

While there was not enough wind, the sailboat was stranded.

23. Louise will sleep soundly, *even if* her alarm clock has gone off.

Even if her alarm clock goes off, Louise will sleep soundly.

Louise will sleep soundly *until* her alarm clock goes off.

24. The horse won't get out of its stall *if* you lock the door.

If you lock the door, the horse won't get out of its stall.

After you lock the door, the horse won't get out of its stall.

25. Dr. Kroger has high expectations of his students, *as* they work hard.

Dr. Kroger has high expectations of his students, *so long as* they work hard.

Dr. Kroger has high expectations of his students, *so* they work hard.

16



Combining Sentences

It is my ambition to say in ten sentences what others say in a whole book.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher
and writer (1844–1900)

LESSON SUMMARY

Good writing includes sentences of varying lengths and complexity that make text more appealing and inviting to readers. To start with, you can achieve this by combining your sentences. In this lesson, you will learn how to do just that.

If you have ever read a book written for young readers, you probably noticed that the sentences were simple, direct, and short. While that kind of language may be helpful for beginning readers, it becomes extremely monotonous and uninteresting for advanced readers. Books that are more interesting to read contain a variety of sentence lengths and complexities. Authors accomplish this by combining sentences.

Besides simple sentences, there are three other kinds of basic sentences: compound, complex, and compound-complex.

We know that independent clauses are simple sentences, which must have, minimally, a simple subject and predicate. (See Lesson 11.)

Examples:

Nathan talks.

Les listens.

Nora laughs.

The following table maps out simple sentence structures. These examples do not include the infinite number of modifying words, phrases, and clauses that could be added for detail.

SIMPLE SENTENCE STRUCTURES

(Implied subject <i>you</i>) + (V erb = simple sentence	<i>Watch!</i>
(S ubject + V = simple sentence	<i>Sam watched.</i>
S + V + (O bject =	<i>Sam watched baseball.</i>
(C ompound S + V + O =	<i>Sam and Joe watched baseball.</i>
S + CV + O =	<i>Sam watched and played baseball.</i>
S + V + CO =	<i>Sam watched baseball and football.</i>
CS + CV + O =	<i>Sam and Joe watched and played baseball.</i>
CS + V + CO =	<i>Sam and Joe watched baseball and football.</i>
S + CV + CO =	<i>Sam watched and played baseball and football.</i>
CS + CV + CO =	<i>Sam and Joe watched and played baseball and football.</i>

Compound Sentences

Shorter sentences can be combined into one complete thought or sentence.

Example:

Nathan, Les, and Nora enjoy talking, listening, and laughing.

While that livens up the writing a bit, it is still rather limited. For more complex sentence structure, take two or more related sentences, or independent clauses, and join them with a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so*) or a semicolon to create a compound sentence.

Examples:

Nathan and Nora talk and laugh; Les listens.
 Les listens; Nathan and Nora talk and laugh.
 Nathan and Nora talk and laugh, **but** Les listens.
 Les listens, **yet** Nathan and Nora talk and laugh.
 Nathan and Nora talk and laugh, **so** Les listens.
 Les listens, **and** Nathan and Nora talk and laugh.

The combinations are, of course, interchangeable. The coordinating conjunction *or* is a good choice if the equal subjects have an alternative. The coordinating conjunction *nor* is a better choice if the expressions are *negative*. The conjunction *for*, denoting “because,” would work grammatically, but isn’t very logical.

Practice

Combine the following simple sentences to create a compound sentence.

1. Isaac went to California to visit UCLA. Isaac's parents went too.
2. I tried to cross the street. There was too much traffic.
3. The sun was shining. The weather was warm. I went to the beach.
4. Hannah looked for her lost earring. She found it under her bed.
5. Give me the broken vase. I'll fix it.
6. Yesterday was snowy and very cold. That didn't bother the children. They went outside to play anyway.
7. Those are both electives. You can take photography. You can take sculpture.
8. We vacationed last year in Virginia Beach. We will go to Orlando this year.
9. Frank took out his fishing pole. He couldn't put bait on the hook. He didn't catch a fish.
10. I turned on my computer. I could finish my assignment. It needed to be on time.

Complex Sentences

In addition to compound sentences, we can create **complex sentences** by combining one independent clause and one or more subordinate (dependent) clauses.

Examples:

Les sat and listened *while Nathan and Nora laughed and talked.*

While Nathan and Nora laughed and talked, Les sat and listened.

Les sat and listened *while Nathan and Nora laughed and talked, although he wasn't feeling well.*

Although he wasn't feeling well, Les sat and listened *while Nathan and Nora laughed and talked.*

TIP

Remember to put your key message in the main subject/verb position of your sentence. Do not hide it in other clauses.

Compound-Complex Sentences

Finally, we can create **compound-complex sentences**, using at least two independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses.

Examples:

Les sat and listened *while Nathan and Nora laughed and talked, for* he wasn't feeling well.

While Nathan and Nora laughed and talked, Les sat and listened, *since* he wasn't feeling well.

Les wasn't feeling well, *so* he sat and listened *while Nathan and Nora laughed and talked.*

Note that the boldfaced word in each of these sentences is a conjunction.

Practice

Identify the independent and subordinate clauses in the following sentences and determine whether they are complex or compound-complex.

11. Karla stayed at work because she had a lot to do.
12. If we want to get to the station on time, we should hurry.
13. Although we have driven 20 miles, I have to go back home because I forgot my wallet.
14. While taking out the garbage, Tiffany tripped on a tree root and she stubbed her toe badly.
15. When Drake goes to work he has to take the New Jersey Turnpike, even if there is a lot of traffic.
16. If Jacob decides to go back to school, he will pursue his doctorate in history, although it will take more than three years for him to finish it.
17. After we arrived back home, my throat started to hurt and I became feverish.
18. Although cats are very independent pets, they will approach someone they trust for affection.
19. Sometimes computers can be obstinate, especially when they won't do what we want them to.
20. Mr. Ferrara posted the missing signs around the neighborhood, hoping that someone had seen his little dog, Jack.

Appositive Phrases

By adding modifiers in the form of adjectives, adverbs, or phrases to any type of sentence, we can make it even more interesting:

Nathan and Nora, **best friends**, talked and laughed **about last night's party**, but Les, **who wasn't feeling well**, just sat **quietly** and listened.

The appositive phrase *best friends*, the adverb phrase *about last night's party*, the noun clause *who wasn't feeling well*, and the adverb *quietly* were added to the sentences to provide more information about the subjects *Nathan*, *Nora*, and *Les*, and the predicates *laughed* and *sat*. Vivid details such as these make sentences more attention grabbing and inviting to read.

TIP

When you write, read your more complex sentences aloud, then make changes until you find the smoothest, most effective combinations.

Answers

(Possible answers are shown.)

- 1.** Isaac went to California to visit UCLA, **and** Isaac's parents went too.
- 2.** I tried to cross the street, **but** there was too much traffic.
- 3.** The sun was shining **and** the weather was warm, **so** I went to the beach.
- 4.** Hannah looked for her lost earring; **she** found it under her bed.
- 5.** Give me the broken vase **and** I'll fix it.
- 6.** Yesterday was snowy and very cold, **but** that didn't bother the children; **they** went outside to play anyway.
- 7.** Those are both electives, **so** you can take photography **or** you can take sculpture.
- 8.** We vacationed last year in Virginia Beach, **so** we will go to Orlando this year.
- 9.** Frank took out his fishing pole, **but** he couldn't put bait on the hook, **so** he didn't catch fish.
- 10.** I turned on my computer **so** I could finish my assignment, **for** it needed to be on time.

(Note that in answers 11–20, the independent clauses are boldfaced and the subordinate clauses are underlined.)

- 11.** **Karla stayed at work** because she had a lot to do. (complex)
- 12.** If we want to get to the station on time, we should hurry. (complex)
- 13.** Although we have driven 20 miles, I have to go back home because I forgot my wallet. (complex)
- 14.** While taking out the garbage, Tiffany tripped on a tree root and she stubbed her toe badly. (compound-complex)
- 15.** When Drake goes to work he has to take the New Jersey Turnpike, even if there is a lot of traffic. (complex)
- 16.** If Jacob decides to go back to school, he will pursue his doctorate in history, although it will take more than three years for him to finish it. (complex)
- 17.** After we arrived back home, my throat started to hurt and I became feverish. (compound-complex)
- 18.** Although cats are very independent pets, they will approach someone they trust for affection. (complex)
- 19.** Sometimes computers can be obstinate, especially when they won't do what we want them to. (complex)
- 20.** Mr. Ferrara posted the missing signs around the neighborhood, hoping that someone had seen his little dog, Jack. (complex)

Punctuation



17



End Punctuation

My attitude toward punctuation is that it ought to be as conventional as possible.

—Ernest Hemingway, American author (1899–1961)

LESSON SUMMARY

Review the basics of end punctuation and its proper placement in sentences and abbreviations.

Periods

The most common form of end punctuation, the **period** (.) indicates the end of declarative sentences (statements of facts) and imperative sentences (simple commands or requests).

Examples:

Friday night is pizza night for my family.

Order an extra-large pepperoni with mushroom, please.

Periods are also used with common abbreviations, such as months, days, and measurements (Dec., Mon., .02). Note that periods are **not** used for acronyms—abbreviations that use all capital letters (NATO, CEO, DNA) or for postal state abbreviations (SD, AL, NJ). Finally, periods are used after a person's initials (T.S. Eliot, W.C. Fields) and for titles such as Dr., Mr., or Gov. If a sentence ends with an abbreviation that has an end period, use it as the end mark, unless the sentence needs an exclamation point or question mark.

Example:

It happened at exactly 3 P.M.

But:

It happened at exactly 3 P.M.!

Did it happen at exactly 3 P.M.?

TIP

Always identify an acronym before you use it unless you are sure the average reader would know it because it is used more often than the words it stands for, such as AIDS or NATO. For example, you might write about the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Practice

Insert periods to correctly punctuate each of the following sentences. You may check your answers against the key at the end of the lesson.

- 1.** Mr Gerald F Kurtry is a family friend He works in St Louis
- 2.** The 1980 eruption of Mt St Helens in Wash state destroyed more than 200 sq miles of forest and timber
- 3.** Dr Karen Lee has been the head of the Health Department in Boone Cty for almost 20 years
- 4.** Did Gov and Mrs Varnes enjoy their trip to Essex Jct, VT?
- 5.** The Drama Club elections have been rescheduled for 3 P.M. Thursday, Sept 9

Question Marks

The **question mark** (?) indicates the end of an interrogatory sentence (direct question).

Examples:

Isn't this difficult?

May I try this time?

Are you okay?

Indirect questions are statements that only sound like questions, so they end with a period.

Example:

She saw the frustrated look on my face and asked if she could help me. I asked her where the laundry detergent was.

Exclamation Points

An **exclamation point** (!) at the end of a sentence indicates strong feeling or authoritative commands. Interjections—free-standing words or phrases that express strong feelings—are also punctuated with exclamation points.

Examples:

Wow! What a mess you've made!

Look where you're going!

TIP

Using two or more exclamation points at the end of a sentence for extra emphasis may seem like a good idea, but in fact it is incorrect and it may be thought of as rude.

Practice

In each group of three, determine which sentence is properly punctuated with question marks and exclamation points.

- 6.** a. Help! I am going to drop these groceries?
b. Help? I am going to drop these groceries!
c. Help! I am going to drop these groceries!

- 7.** a. What did she say? I didn't hear her.
b. What did she say. I didn't hear her.
c. What did she say? I didn't hear her?

- 8.** a. Why her? She already has two and doesn't need any more.
b. Why her! She already has two and doesn't need any more?
c. Why her? She already has two and doesn't need any more?

- 9.** a. How shocking. I never thought she would go through with it!
b. How shocking? I never thought she would go through with it.
c. How shocking! I never thought she would go through with it!

- 10.** a. What a great job? Can you do it again?
b. What a great job! Can you do it again?
c. What a great job. Can you do it again?

Answers

- 1.** Mr. Gerald F. Kurtry is a family friend. He works in St. Louis.
- 2.** The 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens, in Wash. state destroyed more than 200 sq. miles of forest and timber.
- 3.** Dr. Karen Lee has been the head of the Health Department in Boone Cty. for almost 20 years.
- 4.** Did Gov. and Mrs. Varnes enjoy their trip to Essex Jct., VT?
- 5.** The Drama Club elections have been rescheduled for 3 P.M. Thursday, Sept. 9.
- 6. c.**
- 7. a.**
- 8. a.**
- 9. c.**
- 10. b.**

18



Internal Punctuation I

The writer who neglects punctuation, or mispunctuates, is liable to be misunderstood. . . . For the want of merely a comma, it often occurs that an axiom appears a paradox, or that a sarcasm is converted into a sermonoid.

—Edgar Allan Poe, American poet, critic,
and short-story author (1809–1845)

LESSON SUMMARY

Commas, colons, and semicolons: They are ordinary kinds of punctuation, but they can be tricky. Learn where and when it is appropriate, and necessary, to use these misused marks.

Commas

You find **commas** everywhere. They indicate a pause in writing, just as taking a breath is a pause in speaking. Commas are used to set apart some modifiers, phrases, and clauses, and to enhance clarity by adding a sense of pace in written materials. There are some hard and fast rules for comma placement, but usage can often be a matter of personal style. Some writers use them frequently, others do not. Just keep this in mind as you write: Too many, or too few, commas can obscure the meaning of your message. On the following pages, you'll find some basic rules about comma use.

Rule 1. Use commas to separate a series of three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.

Examples:

Please pick up **milk, bread, and bananas** from the store on your way home from work.

Shelly **grabbed her coat, put it on, and ran to the bus.**

However, if your series uses the words *and* or *or* to connect them, a comma is not necessary.

Examples:

Red **and** white **and** blue are patriotic colors.

I cannot look at pictures of snakes **or** spiders **or** mice without anxiety.

Not:

Red, **and** white, **and** blue are patriotic colors.

I cannot look at pictures of snakes, **or** spiders, **or** mice without anxiety.

If you use two or more adjectives to describe a noun or pronoun, use a comma to separate them.

Example:

He was a **happy, intelligent** child.

Be careful not to put a comma between the final adjective and the word it modifies.

Rule 2. Set off an introductory word or phrase from the rest of the sentence with a comma. (See Lesson 13 for a review of phrases.)

This pause stops readers from carrying the meaning of the introduction into the main part of the sentence, which might lead to misinterpretation.

Confusing:

After eating the flower shop owner and his manager tallied the day's receipts.

It seems as though someone was very hungry . . .

Less Confusing:

After eating, the flower shop owner and his manager tallied the day's receipts.

Confusing:

Laughing Larry tried to tell the joke but just couldn't.

What a strange name, Laughing Larry . . .

Less Confusing:

Laughing, Larry tried to tell the joke but just couldn't.

A transitional phrase should also be set off by a comma if it introduces a sentence, or by two commas if it is within the sentence.

Examples:

Fluke has two eyes on its left side, and is, **in fact**, known as summer flounder.

On the other hand, winter flounder has two eyes on its right side.

Rule 3. An appositive, a word or phrase that renames or enhances a noun, should be set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Examples:

You, **Nancy**, are the winner.

Our neighbor, **a well known architect**, helped us draw up the plans.

An experienced sailor, Marie was unconcerned about the high waves.

These appositive phrases set off by commas are nonrestrictive, or not essential; even if they are removed, the sentence will remain complete.

Rule 4. Use commas in dates, addresses, and in non-business letter salutations and closings.

Dates

Use commas after the day of the week, the day of the month, and the year (only if the sentence continues):

Our Cirque du Soleil tickets are for Wednesday, July 18, at Madison Square Garden in New York, NY.

TIP

If you are writing only the day and month or the month and year in a sentence, no comma is necessary.

Examples:

The Cirque du Soleil show was on July 18.
The last time I saw a circus was in June 2007.

Addresses

When writing an address on an envelope or at the head of a letter, use a comma only before an apartment number or state abbreviation.

Example:

Marshall Grates
122 Ridge Road, Apt. 10
Ulysses Junction, MN 57231

When referring to an address within a sentence, use additional commas to substitute for line breaks.

Example:

Please send the order to Marshall Grates,
122 Ridge Road, Ulysses Junction,
MN 57231.

Notice that no commas are necessary between the state and the ZIP code.

However, when alluding to a city and state in a sentence (without the ZIP code) use a comma after the state.

Example:

I traveled through St. Louis, MO, on my way to Chicago.

The same rule applies for a city and country as well:

Sometimes Elaine travels to Paris, France, in the fall.

Salutations and Closings

When writing a letter, use a comma after the person's name and after your closing. Note that a business letter salutation requires a colon rather than a comma.

	PERSONAL LETTER	BUSINESS LETTER
Salutation	Dear Aunt Rosie,	Dear Sir/Madam:
Closing	Love, Yours truly, Fondly,	Sincerely, Respectfully, Best Regards,

Rule 5. Use commas before the coordinating conjunction *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so* if it is followed by an independent clause.

Examples:

Frank is retired, **and** his wife, Louise, will retire this year.

Frank is retired, **yet** his wife, Louise, will work for another three years.

Rule 6. Use commas before, within, and after direct quotations (the exact words someone says), whether the speaker is identified at the beginning or the end.

Examples:

Drew said, “Our trip to Aruba was awesome.”

“Our trip to Aruba,” Drew said, “was awesome.”

“Our trip to Aruba was awesome,” Drew said.

Note that an indirect quote means someone is conveying what someone else said. Do not use commas to set off the speaker in an indirect quotation.

Example:

Drew said that their trip to Aruba was awesome.

Rule 7. Commas are used with titles and degrees only when they follow the person’s name.

Examples:

Arthur Mari, M.D.

Sandy Dugan, Ph.D.

Dr. Foster

Dr. Sandy Dugan

Rule 8. Commas are used when writing numbers longer than three digits.

In order to make a long number like 1479363072 easier to read, it is customary to place commas after group numbers into threes from **right to left**, dividing them into thousands, ten-thousands, hundred-thousands, and so on: 1,479,363,072.

Exceptions to this rule are phone numbers, page numbers, ZIP codes, years, serial numbers, and house numbers.

Example:

Edison, New Jersey, has five ZIP codes: 08817, 08818, 08820, 08837, and 08899.

As in any other series, commas should be placed between whole numbers in a series of numbers.

Example:

Refer to pages 466, 467, and 468 in the phone book to find information on ZIP codes.

TIP

Read each sentence you write aloud to see where you would naturally pause to take a breath before the end. That is where you may need to put a comma.

Practice

Add commas where necessary in the following sentences or phrases.

1. My mom lives at 521 N. Colfax Street La Habra California.
2. Thomas Jefferson died on July 4 1826 in Monticello Virginia.
3. Dear Dad

4. Very truly yours
5. February 2 2010 is our 25th anniversary.
6. Brittany's birthday party is March 21 2009 at the pavilion in West End Park in Columbia South Carolina.
7. The Blue Ridge Mountains part of the Appalachian Mountain Range begin in Georgia and run through North Carolina Tennessee Virginia and Maryland and end in Pennsylvania.
8. "You're invited to the cast party" said Randy "and you'll meet the star of the show Stan Hanks."
9. We had a choice of steak fish or vegetable plate at Marcie's bridal dinner.
10. For her work as a surgeon during the Civil War Dr. Mary Edwards Walker became the first woman to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Colons

Colons are used to introduce a word, a sentence, a list, a quotation, or a phrase. They say “here is an example” or “an example is going to follow.”

Example:

On your first day of the art workshop, please bring the following items to room 601 of Larsson Hall: a charcoal pencil, two paintbrushes, a drawing pad, and your creativity.

Do not use a colon when introducing a list if the colon follows a preposition or a verb.

Incorrect:

On your first day of the art workshop, please bring: a charcoal pencil, two paintbrushes, a drawing pad, and your creativity to: room 601 of Larsson Hall.

A colon can also introduce an excerpt or long quotation in your writing

Example:

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), diplomat, politician, physicist, writer, and inventor is quoted as saying: “All human situations have their inconveniences. We feel those of the present but neither see nor feel those of the future; and hence we often make troublesome changes without amendment, and frequently for the worse.”

and set off the subtitle of a movie or book.

Examples:

Phenomenal Women: Four Poems Celebrating Women is written by Maya Angelou, one of America’s finest female poets.

Jimmy has watched *Barnyard: The Original Party* four times this weekend.

Lastly, colons are used to separate the hour from minutes in written time,

The next bus for New York City leaves at 10:20 A.M.

and between numbers when citing the volume and pages of books and magazines.

Please refer to Volume 3: pages 4–9 for further information.

Semicolons

Also called the “super comma,” the **semicolon** is used to link two topic-related independent clauses (sentences) when a coordinating conjunction is not used.

Examples:

Steven’s sister, Haley, is short.

Steven is tall.

Steven’s sister, Haley, is short; Steven is tall.

Use a semicolon between two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so*) only when commas are also used in the sentence.

TIP

Remember, whatever follows a semicolon has to be able to stand on its own as a complete sentence.

Example:

Because Haley is 6'2" tall, she is taller than most people; *but* she is the shortest sibling in her family.

Use a semicolon between two independent clauses separated by a transitional word or phrase or by a conjunctive adverb.

Example:

At 6'8", Steven is tall; *therefore*, even at 6'2", Steven’s sister, Haley, is short in her family.

COMMON CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

afterward	accordingly	besides
coincidentally	consequently	furthermore
hence	however	indeed
instead	likewise	moreover
nevertheless	nonetheless	otherwise
similarly	so	still
then	therefore	thus

Practice

Add colons and semicolons where necessary in the following sentences.

11. Darla’s grocery list included six items eggs, milk, toothpaste, soap, cat food, and bleach.

12. To whom it may concern

13. Tabitha used to watch *Star Trek The Next Generation* after school every day.

14. Which time is better for you, 1200 P.M. or 230 P.M.?

15. Dad rang the doorbell several times he had lost his key.

16. Although Joseph is far from home, he still brings his laundry when he visits perhaps he should invest in a new washer and dryer.

17. Daren admires Winston Churchill’s quote “We make a living by what we get we make a life by what we give.”

- 18.** Mr. Joe owns Kelsey's Bakery coincidentally, Kelsey owns Joe's Bar and Grill.
- 19.** He just made a hole-in-one there was no one there to see it but him.
- 20.** The instructions said to consult Volume J pages 30–36 and Volume P pages 89–90 for further information.
- 11.** Darla's grocery list included six items: eggs, milk, toothpaste, soap, cat food, and bleach.
- 12.** To whom it may concern:
- 13.** Tabitha used to watch *Star Trek: The Next Generation* after school every day.
- 14.** Which time is better for you, 12:00 p.m. or 2:30 p.m.?
- 15.** Dad rang the doorbell several times; he had lost his key.
- 16.** Although Joseph is far from home, he still brings his laundry when he visits; perhaps he should invest in a new washer and dryer.
- 17.** Daren admires Winston Churchill's quote: "We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."
- 18.** Mr. Joe owns Kelsey's Bakery; coincidentally, Kelsey owns Joe's Bar and Grill.
- 19.** He just made a hole-in-one; there was no one there to see it but him.
- 20.** The instructions said to consult Volume J: pages 30–36 and Volume P: pages 89–90 for further information.

Answers

- 1.** My mom lives at 521 N. Colfax Street, La Habra, California.
- 2.** Thomas Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, in Monticello, Virginia.
- 3.** Dear Dad,
- 4.** Very truly yours,
- 5.** February 2, 2010, is our 25th anniversary.
- 6.** Brittany's birthday party is March 21, 2009, at the pavilion in West End Park in Columbia, South Carolina.
- 7.** The Blue Ridge Mountains, part of the Appalachian Mountain Range, begin in Georgia and run through North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Maryland, and end in Pennsylvania.
- 8.** "You're invited to the cast party," said Randy, "and you'll meet the star of the show, Stan Hanks."
- 9.** We had a choice of steak, fish, or vegetable plate at Marcie's bridal dinner.
- 10.** For her work as a surgeon during the Civil War, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker became the first woman to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor.

19



Internal Punctuation II

But through every clause and part of speech of the right book I meet the eyes of the most determined men; his force and terror inundate every word: the commas and dashes are alive; so that the writing is athletic and nimble,—can go far and live long.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, U.S. essayist,
poet, and philosopher (1803–1882)

LESSON SUMMARY

Knowing when and how to use contractions or show possession, and whether to divide, join, interrupt, or emphasize your words and phrases correctly, is essential in good writing. This lesson shows you when and how.

Apostrophes are used to create contractions, to make nouns possessive, and, in rare instances, to make a noun plural.

Apostrophes

Contractions

Contract (con-TRACT) means to squeeze together or shorten. In informal writing, we shorten two words into one, using an apostrophe to create a **contraction**. For instance, *has* and *not* would become *hasn't*. The following table shows some other common contractions.

INTERNAL PUNCTUATION II

PRONOUN CONTRACTIONS

	AM	WILL	HAVE/HAS	HAD/WOULD
I	I'm	I'll	I've	I'd
you	you're	you'll	you've	you'd
he	he's	he'll	he's	he'd
she	she's	she'll	she's	she'd
it	it's	it'll	it's	it'd
we	we're	we'll	we've	we'd
they	they're	they'll	they've	they'd

HELPING VERB CONTRACTIONS

is	+	not	=	isn't
are	+	not	=	aren't
was	+	not	=	wasn't
were	+	not	=	weren't
have	+	not	=	haven't
has	+	not	=	hasn't
had	+	not	=	hadn't
might	+	not	=	mightn't
can	+	not	=	can't
do	+	not	=	don't
did	+	not	=	didn't
should	+	not	=	shouldn't
would	+	not	=	wouldn't
could	+	not	=	couldn't

Note that contractions are not used in formal writing. Use formal writing mainly for academic or business communications; use informal, or more casual, writing for reader-friendly messages.

Possessive Nouns

Possessives are nouns that show ownership. To make a singular noun possessive, add -'s. Be careful not to confuse the plural form of a noun with the possessive.

Plural Form:

The writer of the news **stories** won a Pulitzer.

Singular Possessive:

The news **story's** writer won a Pulitzer.

The first sentence tells us that the writer of multiple stories won a Pulitzer. The second sentence tells us the writer of one story won a Pulitzer.

To form the possessive of the plural noun *stories*, add an apostrophe after the final *-s*.

Plural Possessive:

The news **stories'** writer won a Pulitzer.

This sentence also tells us that the writer of multiple stories won a Pulitzer. The *-s'* rule applies only to plural nouns ending with an *-s*. For example, the possessive of the plural noun *children*, which does not end in *-s*, would be *children's*.

To form the possessive of a singular noun ending with *-s*, do one of two things: add *-s'* or just add an apostrophe after the *-s*.

Examples:

Kara Reynolds's picture was in the newspaper this morning.

Kara Reynolds' picture was in the newspaper this morning.

Plurals with Apostrophe + s

There are a few occasions when *-s'* is required to make a noun plural.

Add *-s'* to form the plural of abbreviations that contain more than one period, such as Ph.D. or M.D.

Example:

M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s are doctorate degrees in medicine and philosophy.

Add *-s'* to form the plural of words, letters, and numbers that we do not commonly see in the plural form.

Examples:

How many **um's** and **uh's** did you count in the run-through of my speech?

I got four **A's** and two **B's** on my report card.

Please write your **5's** and **8's** more clearly on tests.

Practice

Place apostrophes where they belong in the following sentences.

1. The mans rake wasnt left in the leaf pile.
2. My mothers tablecloth was stained with grease.
3. You shouldnt pull your sisters hair.
4. The secretarys phone rang off the hook all morning.
5. Maries umbrella was blown inside out.
6. The snowstorms forecast didnt keep us out of school.
7. Kyles pep talks are always the best arent they?
8. Mandys parents grounded her, so she couldnt go to the concert with me.
9. There was a huge pile of students papers on the teachers desk.
10. That actresss British accent wasnt very good.

Hyphens and Em-Dashes

Although they look similar, hyphens and em-dashes perform two completely different jobs; hyphens divide and join, while em-dashes interrupt and emphasize. Knowing the difference will help you better identify them in your reading and correctly utilize them in your writing.

Hyphens

Hyphens divide words at the ends of lines, separate numbers, join compound words, and attach prefixes and suffixes.

To divide a word at the end of a line of typed text, place a hyphen at a syllable break in the word.

Examples:

cir-cum-stance
ab-bre-vi-a-tion
po-ly-vi-nyl

TIP

Syllables are the individual spoken units of a word, consisting of a vowel or a vowel-consonant combination. To find syllable breaks in a word, simply tap your finger or clap your hand for each spoken unit. The word *syllable*, for instance, has three separate audible units: *syl*, *a*, and *ble*. To write the syllables, divide the correctly-spelled word into the units you hear. (Note that not all dictionaries agree on the breakdown of all word units.)

Hyphens are used to join many prefixes, such as *great-*, *all-*, *half-*, *ex-*, *self-*, and the suffix *-elect*, to existing words in order to create a new word:

great-grandfather	great-aunt
all-encompassing	all-American
half-moon	half-hearted
ex-wife	ex-mayor
self-esteem	self-regulated
governor-elect	president-elect

Hyphens are also used to turn phrases into a single unit,

sister-in-law jack-in-the-box forget-me-not

to separate word units when spelling out the numbers 21 to 99 or fractions,

thirty-six ninety-nine six-eighths one-fourth

and in scores and dates.

The Red Sox beat the White Sox 10–3 on Friday. The article from the 08-23-06 *Chicago Sun* edition was incorrect.

Hyphens are useful to avoid confusion.

Example:

Mr. Johnson tried to recollect how he planned to **re-collect** the student's papers this time to avoid unnecessary chaos.

They are also helpful when spelling certain compound words that would look awkward.

Example:

The button's shell-like appearance made it intriguing.

Without the hyphen, *shell-like* would become *shelllike*, with three *l*'s crashing together!

TIP

Remember, not all prefixes require a hyphen. Usually, a hyphen is used when a letter becomes doubled or tripled, or if the added prefix creates a spelling similar to that of another word. Always check a dictionary if you are not sure.

Em-Dashes

Em-dashes are used to indicate incidental thoughts in writing.

Example:

Louis's favorite color is—let me guess—pink!

Like a colon, but less formal, an em-dash can be used to set off a short series of phrases or words in a sentence.

Example:

I bought what I needed—lipstick, blush, eye shadow, liner pencils, and foundation—at the department store cosmetic counter.

TIP

When using em-dashes, make sure that the parts of the sentence before and after them would make sense if you were to remove the em-dashes and the words they set off.

Practice

Determine where hyphens or em-dashes should be appropriately placed in the following sentences.

11. Everything the dresser, bed, tables, and your desk needs to be moved before we can paint.
12. At seventy nine, Mr. Perkins is extraordinarily active.
13. We made it to the top of the mountain the view was spectacular!
14. My brothers in law are the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet.
15. It is said that possession is nine tenths of the law.
16. One hundred fifty five people filed into the courthouse to view the arraignments.
17. Denny was asked to re-glue the eyes onto his puppet's face, as they had fallen off.

18. Mary said her ex sister in law would always be a part of the family.
19. Jayne loves playing with her daddy's old jack in the box that her grandma brought.
20. Some old movie theme songs *M*A*S*H*, *The Pink Panther*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *The Wizard of Oz* are classics that will live on for all time.

Answers

1. man's, wasn't
2. mother's
3. shouldn't, sister's
4. secretary's
5. Marie's
6. snowstorm's, didn't
7. Kyle's, aren't
8. Mandy's, couldn't
9. students', teacher's
10. actress's, wasn't
11. Everything—the dresser, bed, tables, and your desk—needs to be moved before we can paint.
12. At seventy-nine, Mr. Perkins is extraordinarily active.
13. We made it to the top of the mountain—the view was spectacular!
14. My brothers-in-law are the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet.
15. It is said that possession is nine-tenths of the law.
16. One hundred fifty-five people filed into the courthouse to view the arraignments.
17. Denny was asked to re-glue the eyes onto his puppet's face, as they had fallen off.
18. Mary said her ex-sister-in-law would always be a part of the family.
19. Jayne loves playing with her daddy's old jack-in-the-box that her grandma brought.
20. Some old movie theme songs—*M*A*S*H*, *The Pink Panther*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *The Wizard of Oz*—are classics that will live on for all time.

20

Internal Punctuation III

It is an old error of man to forget to put quotation marks where he borrows from a woman's brain!

—Anna Garlin Spencer, American educator,
author, and feminist (1851–1931)

LESSON SUMMARY

It is helpful to know how to write dialogue, insert a parenthetical comment, and editorialize in your writing. Learn the proper way to do these things in this lesson.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used in writing to show someone's exact words, or dialogue. This word-for-word account is called a direct quotation. To set the **direct quotation** apart, you need to use opening and ending quotation marks: “ and ”.

TIP

When attributing quotations, as with any dialogue, choose interesting verbs. Constant use of “he said” or “she said” can become tedious. Use a variety of synonyms, like “he announced,” “they replied,” “he acknowledged,” “she murmured,” “he snarled,” “they reported,” or “she queried.”

If someone just *refers* to someone else's words, this is called an **indirect quotation**, which does NOT require quotation marks.

Example:

Margaret said that the teller patiently told her to please enter the code again.

Quotation marks also are not used in recording someone's thoughts.

Example:

Margaret thought the teller had a lot of patience.

We sometimes put quotation marks around a word (or words) to stress its meaning or convey uncertainty or misgivings about its validity to readers.

Example:

It escapes me why Victor, a Wall Street broker, was asked to speak to our Lifeguard Association as an “expert” on rescue techniques.

TIP

Here are some helpful guidelines for using quotation marks:

- Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation if it is the first word of the quotation or starts the sentence in which it is quoted.
- Always place periods and commas inside the end quotes.
- Place question marks and exclamation marks inside the end quotes only if they are part of the quotation. Otherwise, place them after the end quotes.

Examples:

Nancy whined, “I am so hungry!”

Did you hear her say, “I can’t eat another bite”?

- Always place colons and semicolons outside the end quote.
- Place a comma before the opening quotes when the quote is preceded by words that imply speaking, such as *said*, *stated*, *replied*, and *cried*.

Example:

Cosmos whispered, “I can’t see—please move over.”

- When a quote is interrupted, enclose each part in quotation marks. Place a comma inside the first end quotes, then have the interrupting words followed by a comma before adding the second opening quotes.

Example:

“The first quarter’s numbers are in,” remarked Ted, “and they look very encouraging!”

Note that *and* at the beginning of the second part of the quote is not capitalized, because it is not starting a new sentence but continuing the first.

Practice

Place quotation marks, commas, and end marks in the following sentences, and change to caps as needed, or note that they are correct as written.

1. Are you going to the class reunion asked Jennifer
2. I can't wait another minute Lee announced how did your job interview go
3. Randy said his graduation gift from his grandparents would blow you away
4. Yes I would like that thank you said Henry
5. Isn't it just like Jane to say something like that thought Kevin
6. Your projects on photosynthesis are due on Monday said Mr. Lang
7. The police officer asked the suspect where were you on February 12 at 9:00 A.M.
8. The pictures sighed the photographer came out blurry
9. My manager reminded us that the customer is always right
10. The next stop is Chambers Street said the bus driver

Parentheses

Parentheses are used to provide extra or incidental information within or at the end of a sentence. The information inside the parentheses is called a **parenthetical comment**.

Example:

Ron Kenny wound up with the Salesperson of the Year Award (remember how he struggled at the beginning of the year?).

Note that even if you take the parenthetical comment out of the sentence, it still makes sense.

Parentheses also set off dates and page numbers within sentences, or in citations in some styles of academic writing.

Examples

Information regarding the migration of Monarch butterflies can be found in Chapter 22 (pages 97–113).

In a famous study of Jane Austen (1775–1817) and her many literary accomplishments . . . (Dawson, 1989) . . .

Parentheses can be used for itemizing numbers or letters:

Please write your (1) name, (2) address, and (3) DOB.

Please write your (a) name, (b) address, and (c) DOB.

TIP

If your parenthetical comment is part of the whole sentence, do not put a period or other end mark inside the parentheses. But if the note is a complete sentence, put a punctuation mark inside the parentheses.

Parentheses are also used for providing, or defining, abbreviations.

Examples:

There has been recent news from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) . . .

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a new . . .

Finally, parentheses can be used to indicate an alternative form of a written term.

Examples:

Before printing, carefully select the page(s) you need . . .

Write the name(s) on the form and submit.

Practice

Determine where the parentheses should be placed in the following sentences.

11. While at the resort, you may have breakfast a in your room, b on the deck, or c by the pool.
12. We skated or should I say swept the floor at the rink this weekend.
13. The British Broadcasting Company BBC broadcasts on cable channel 67.
14. The girls were all given brown fuzzy teddy bears cute! for their birthdays.
15. You should indicate the CDs you want before they sell out.
16. At the convenience store, there was a line that consisted of 15 people which made it not so convenient.

17. The American Automobile Association AAA has serviced millions of members since 1921.

18. On April 12, 1861, the Civil War began with the battle at Fort Sumter *National Geographic*, 2002.

19. Mohandas Mahatma Gandhi 1869–1948 was a leader of peaceful protest in India during the 1930s.

20. While fluidly interchangeable, the steps of the writing process are 1 draft, 2 write, 3 revise, 4 edit, and 5 publish.

Brackets

Brackets also help to clarify information, but have a narrower range of uses than parentheses.

When you editorialize (insert comments or missing material within a quote), place the words inside brackets.

Example:

Kim said, “In order for you [Katelyn] to go [to the Monmouth Mall to see a movie], you must finish the dishes first.”

If the capitalization of a word in a quote needs to be altered in order to make it fit in a sentence or paragraph scheme, place the new letter in brackets.

Example:

The *New York Times* article stated that “[b]aseball, an American pastime, is favored by many women as well as children.”

Note that the article would have read “*Baseball, an American pastime . . .*” in the original source.

Practice

Determine where the brackets belong in the following sentences.

- 21.** “The Trojan Horse,” stated Mrs. Mitchell, “was not a gift, but really a cleverly plotted red herring decoy created by the Greeks.”
- 22.** A favorite dance saying is that “if dance were any easier, it would be football.”

23. “If I were you,” said Nathan, “I wouldn’t put it the project off to the last minute.”

24. After my wife and I purchased it our second house, we were overjoyed.

25. “As a teacher, he Mr. Johnson is obliged to report any misconduct he sees throughout the day,” said Mr. Cancro.

Italics and Underlining

When writing by hand, italicizing words is difficult so we underline them instead. In printing and word processing, we can use either one (although underscores are uncommon). Just remember to be consistent. Don’t use one and then another in the same text.

Italicize (or underline) the titles of long works such as books, long poems, magazines, newspapers, or movies.

Examples:

James Michener’s *Chesapeake*

The New Yorker

Robert Frost’s *Birches*

James Michener’s Chesapeake

The New Yorker

Robert Frost’s Birches

Set off shorter works such as stories, songs, short poems, and articles with quotation marks rather than italics or underlines.

Italicize foreign words in your writing.

Example:

The handsome man said, “*Ciao bella*,” when he left the table.

When you want to emphasize a particular word, italicize (or underline) it. The following chart shows how emphasizing different words in a sentence can change the meaning completely.

SAME SENTENCE, FOUR DIFFERENT MEANINGS

I like your shoes.

It is I, and only I, that like them

I like your shoes.

Don’t love them, just like them

I like your shoes.

No one else’s but yours

I like your shoes.

Not your outfit or your hair, but your shoes

Practice

Identify the words and phrases that need to be italicized (or underlined) in the following sentences.

- 26.** “Bonjour, mon ami,” my French neighbor said to me.
- 27.** Newsweek and Time are two popular newsmagazines around the world.
- 28.** It is so annoying when you whine—please stop!
- 29.** Hunt for Red October was an engaging novel written by Tom Clancy, as well as a successful film.
- 30.** How do you know it’s what she wants?

Answers

- 1.** “Are you going to the class reunion?” asked Jennifer.
- 2.** “I couldn’t wait another minute,” Lee announced. “How did your job interview go?”
- 3.** Randy said his graduation gift from his grandparents would blow you away.
- 4.** “Yes, I would like that, thank you,” said Henry.
- 5.** Isn’t it just like Jane to say something like that, thought Kevin.
- 6.** “Your projects on photosynthesis are due on Monday,” said Mr. Lang.
- 7.** The police officer asked the suspect, “Where were you on February 12 at 9:00 A.M.?”
- 8.** “The pictures,” sighed the photographer, “came out blurry.”
- 9.** My manager reminded us that the customer is always right.
- 10.** “The next stop is Chambers Street,” said the bus driver.
- 11.** While at the resort, you may have breakfast (a) in your room, (b) on the deck, or (c) by the pool.
- 12.** We skated (or should I say swept the floor) at the rink this weekend.
- 13.** The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) broadcasts on cable channel 67.
- 14.** The girls were all given brown fuzzy teddy bears (cute!) for their birthdays.
- 15.** You should indicate the CD(s) you want before they sell out.
- 16.** At the convenience store, there was a line that consisted of 15 people (which made it not so convenient).
- 17.** The American Automobile Association (AAA) has serviced millions of members since 1921.
- 18.** On April 12, 1861, the Civil War began with the battle at Fort Sumter (*National Geographic*, 2002).
- 19.** Mohandas Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) was a leader of peaceful protest in India during the 1930s.
- 20.** While fluidly interchangeable, the basic steps of the writing process are (1) draft, (2) write, (3) revise, (4) edit, and (5) publish.

21. “The Trojan Horse,” stated Mrs. Mitchell, “was not a gift, but really a cleverly plotted red herring [decoy] created by the Greeks.”
22. A favorite dance saying is that “[i]f dance were any easier, it would be football.”
23. “If I were you,” said Nathan, “I wouldn’t put it [the project] off to the last minute.”
24. After my wife and I purchased it [our second house], we were overjoyed.
25. “As a teacher, he [Mr. Johnson] is obliged to report any misconduct he sees throughout the day,” said Mr. Cancro.
26. “*Bonjour, mon ami,*” my French neighbor said to me.
27. *Newsweek* and *Time* are two popular newsmagazines around the world.
28. It is *so* annoying when you whine—*please* stop!
29. *Hunt for Red October* was an engaging novel written by Tom Clancy, as well as a successful film.
30. *How* do you know it’s what she wants?
How *do* you know it’s what she wants?
How do *you* know it’s what she wants?
How do you *know* it’s what she wants?
How do you know it’s *what* she wants?
How do you know it’s what *she* wants?
How do you know it’s what she *wants*?

Posttest



Now that you have spent a good deal of time improving your grammar skills, take this posttest to see how much you have learned. Record your answers in this book. If it does not belong to you, list the numbers 1–50 on a piece of paper and write your answers there. Take as much time as you need to finish the test. When you do, check your answers against the correct answers in the section that follows it. Each answer lists the lesson of the book that covers the concept(s) in that question.

If you took the pretest at the beginning of the book, you can compare what you knew then with what you know now. Check your score on this posttest against your score on the pretest. If this score is much greater, congratulations—you have profited noticeably from your hard work. If your score shows little improvement, you may want to review certain chapters, especially if you see a pattern to the kinds of questions you missed. Whatever your score, keep this book handy for review and reference whenever you are unsure of a grammatical rule.

Posttest

- 1.** Circle the common nouns.

pillow	jealousy	fruit
guilt	kindness	breathe
information	clapping	mindless
FBI	cute	razor

- 2.** Circle the abstract nouns.

knowledge	log	pleasure
deceit	pilot	jury
malice	money	banana split
carrots	warmth	hope

- 3.** Circle the proper nouns.

Violin	Chair	President Obama
Harvard	Sabrina	Memphis
Lunch	Earth	Idaho
NBC	Lamps	Pacific

- 4.** Circle the nouns that are pluralized correctly.

televisions	flys	mouses
womans	tooths	analyses
ferries	deers	igloos
knifes	pluses	volcanoes

- 5.** Circle the hyphenated nouns that are spelled correctly.

frees-for-all	not-for-profits
vote-getters	passer-bys
father-in-law	voice-overs

- 6.** Circle the nouns that have been made possessive correctly.

horse's	ant's	doctors'
kittens's	bus's	teachers'
children's	classes'	Max's
band's	child's	class's

- 7.** Circle the antecedents/pronouns that properly agree in gender.

Matt/her	lizard/it
mice/they	Cheryl/she
students/it	you and I/we

- 8.** Circle the antecedents/pronouns that properly agree in number.

kites/they	everyone/it	Paul and I/we
fishermen/they	company/it	deer/it
each/we	player/we	deer/they

- 9.** Circle the interrogative pronouns.

where	when	who
whom	whoever	whose
how	which	whatever

- 10.** Circle the subjective case pronouns.

They gave me the Miss Congeniality award!
She never seems to have time to visit her old neighborhood.
We picked a lot of peaches from our trees.

- 11.** Circle the objective case pronouns.

We lent it to him.
Give me a sign.
He cooked them ravioli.

- 12.** Circle the reflexive case pronouns and underline the possessive case pronouns.

Andrew questioned himself about his decision to buy the treadmill.
His decision about buying the treadmill was rash.
Heather herself wondered what prompted him to buy it.

- 13.** Circle the demonstrative pronoun and underline the relative pronouns.

This isn't a good way to spend the money that you saved!
Is that the neighbor who drove you home from the airport?

14. Circle the action verbs.

look	talk	help	cook
just	draw	itch	be
moisten	should	may	geranium

15. Circle the linking verbs.

take	can	now	not
never	will	are	could
would	am	how	did

16. Circle the regular verbs and underline the irregular verbs.

injure	lock	carry	write
untie	hide	mow	drive
know	grow	cost	throw

17. Circle the correct form of lay/lie in each sentence.

Sammy usually (lays, lies) his schoolbooks on his desk.

This mysterious trunk has (lain, laid) untouched in this attic for decades.

The shopkeeper (laid, lain) his apron on the counter before locking up for the night.

18. Circle the correct form of sit/set in each sentence.
Janice is (setting, sitting) the table before her guests arrive.

Jim (sat, set) down in the comfortable chair and took a short nap.

We had (set, sat) our glasses of lemonade on the orange coasters beside us.

19. Circle the correct tricky words in each sentence.

“Mom, (can, may) I sell some of this old jewelry online?” I asked.

He answered every question on the exam correctly (accept, except) the last one.

Marcy, Chris, and I (hanged, hung) out at the mall almost all day Saturday.

20. Identify the tense of the verbs that follow as

present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, future perfect, present progressive, past progressive, or future progressive.

am swimming	had swum
will have swum	swam
have swum	will swim
were swimming	swims

21. Circle the common adjectives in the following sentences.

Sanjay lent his laptop computer to his longtime friend Benjamin.

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world; however, Nathan prefers tennis.

Elvis was a legendary rock-and-roll performer who was loved by people everywhere.

22. Place the correct indefinite article in front of each noun.

<input type="checkbox"/> hen	<input type="checkbox"/> hour-long lecture
<input type="checkbox"/> honorable person	<input type="checkbox"/> universe
<input type="checkbox"/> one-car family	<input type="checkbox"/> wristwatch
<input type="checkbox"/> orthodontist	<input type="checkbox"/> upperclassman
<input type="checkbox"/> honeybee	<input type="checkbox"/> elegant dinner
<input type="checkbox"/> orangutan	<input type="checkbox"/> underwater city
<input type="checkbox"/> ozone layer	<input type="checkbox"/> opinion
<input type="checkbox"/> umbrella	

23. Change the following proper nouns into proper adjectives.

Greece	Mexico	Asia
Idaho	Denmark	Hawaii
North America	Florida	France
Washington	Belgium	Vietnam
Japan	Maya	Britain

- 24.** Determine whether the boldfaced word in each sentence is a possessive pronoun or a possessive adjective.

I showed Charles **my** coin collection, and he told me about **his**.
Her kindness was undeniable; she would always share what was **hers** with others.
Our hunch was that the deed was really **theirs**, but only time would tell.

- 25.** Determine whether the boldfaced word in each sentence is a demonstrative pronoun or a demonstrative adjective.

That storm isn't moving fast enough to suit me. Hand me **those**, please, before you drop them. **This** has got to be the fastest time you've recorded yet.

- 26.** Determine which form of comparative or superlative adjective best completes each sentence.

The (cooler, coolest) day yet this week was Wednesday, and it was 97 degrees. Yuck! This rock is (slimy, slimier) than the other one. My shoes are the (narrower, narrowest) of all.

- 27.** Circle the correct form of the comparative and superlative adverbs in the following sentences.

Of the three jockeys, Marco rode (more cautiously, most cautiously) during the race. My flight from L.A. to Tucson seemed (longer, longest) than the one from Tucson to New York. People said my coconut custard pie tasted (good, well); in fact Sam said it tasted (better, gooder) than his mom's!

- 28.** Determine whether the boldfaced word in the sentence is an adjective or an adverb.

Lori told Joe not to be too **hard** on himself. Living in **close** quarters can be difficult for some. Kyle went **straight** home after the movie.

- 29.** Identify the prepositional phrases in the following sentences.

Termites were found all around the building. Without a word, he finished dinner and went upstairs to his room. We drove around the back to drop off the heaviest packages first.

- 30.** Determine whether the boldfaced word is a preposition or an adverb.

If you spin **around** quickly, you'll probably get dizzy. We went out for ice cream when the show was **over**. She walked quickly **across** the room to see what had crashed to the floor.

- 31.** Rewrite each sentence so that the misplaced modifiers are properly placed.

Having been burned to a crisp, the chef threw the roast into the sink. Crocks of onion soup were served to the guests dripping with cheese. At the age of five, Kerry's parents brought her to Disney World.

- 32.** Using the clues, write the homonyms or homographs.

group of cattle/listened
give a lecture/where you live
stumble/an excursion
passed away/changed the color
fair-minded/barely
shoreline/glide without power
authentic/spool of film
behavior/run an experiment

- 33.** Identify the simple subject in the following sentences.

Animals that sleep during the day and are awake at night are called nocturnal.

Artificial intelligence is used not only in games, but for medical purposes as well.

Please stop.

Most liked it, although some did not.

Although he lives on his own, Mike still likes coming home once in a while.

- 34.** Identify the simple predicate in the following sentences.

Jane played hopscotch all afternoon.

Stand still, please.

We spotted a turtle on a rock nearby.

- 35.** Identify whether the boldfaced word is a direct or an indirect object in the following sentences.

The orchestra played several Beethoven **pieces**.

The townspeople gave the **sheriff** a welcoming **ovation**.

The judge gave the contest **finalists** extra **time** to prepare for the last round.

- 36.** Identify the predicate nouns and predicate adjectives in the following sentences.

On the hot summer day, Jay's turkey and mayo sandwich turned bad.

Cockatiels can become speaking birds if trained well.

Judy was a pie chef who entered and won many contests.

- 37.** Identify the verb that correctly completes the following sentences.

Bacon and eggs (are, is) the favorite dish of many people who stop at our diner.

Kara and Maria (try, tries) out for the community theater's musical production every year.

Science fiction or mystery (are, is) the only choice of genre left to choose from for my report.

- 38.** Identify the verb that will agree with the indefinite pronouns in the following sentences.

Everyone (go, goes) to the prom each year.

Something (need, needs) to be done about that leak.

While each (prefers, prefer) to eat yogurt, the time of day it's eaten varies widely.

- 39.** Determine which pronoun best fits for proper pronoun/antecedent agreement in each sentence.

The group took _____ yearly retreat to Maine.

Everyone carefully opened _____ package.

The puppy wagged _____ tail eagerly when it saw the mailman at the door.

- 40.** Identify the adjective and adverb phrases in the following sentences.

Some of the shoes on the far shelf cost more than \$300.

The airline representative said the flight should arrive within the hour.

Even though I hung the picture up carefully, it still fell from the wall.

- 41.** Identify the participial phrases, infinitive phrases, and gerund phrases in the following sentences.

Becoming an accomplished pianist has always been Victoria's plan.

To avoid slipping on the ice, wear boots or shoes with a ridged sole.

Leaving his entire fortune to his nephew Lewis, Zach signed his will with little trepidation.

- 42.** Identify the appositive phrases in the following sentences.

I received a great letter of recommendation for a summer internship from Professor Williams, the head of our science department.

Billie Jean King, a professional tennis player, was the first female athlete to win over \$100,000 prize money in a single season.

The American holly has been the state tree of Delaware, the first state to ratify the U. S. Constitution, since 1939.

- 43.** Determine whether each group of words is an independent or a subordinate clause.

As I said

I am learning ballroom dancing

Here are some for you

Well, I should say so

That's life

Stop that

- 44.** Identify the adjective clause in each sentence.

I sang a song that my mom sang to me when I was a baby.

The boy at the end of the line closed the door.

The Asian market where they sell many exotic fruits is down the road from us.

- 45.** Identify the noun clause in each sentence.

I know that drinking water is better than drinking soda.

Do you know what time the store opens?

I can't decide which shoes to wear.

- 46.** Identify the adverb clause in each sentence.

Except for Tanya, we all got soaked while walking back from the auditorium.

Whether or not you believe it, the decision is ultimately yours.

Violet decided to go home for the holidays since her grandparents would be visiting, too.

- 47.** Identify the coordinating conjunctions in each sentence, and the word or group of words it is connecting.

Gold or blue would be the best choice of color for the pillows.

Danielle and Joanna watched a movie, popped popcorn, and stayed up all night talking.

Sometimes we go to the lake so we can water-ski.

- 48.** Identify the simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

- a. Some citizens voted in the town election, but many did not.
- b. To make mashed potatoes, just add butter and milk to the boiled potatoes and mash until creamy.
- c. Put your folded laundry away, please.
- d. Because Jill was late, she missed the introductory overview of the entire workshop.

- 49.** Add punctuation where necessary in the following sentences.

On April 12 1861 the Civil War began with the battle at Fort Sumter

The dentists hygienists and staff threw a surprise party for him

Would you consider using Benjis or Jesss racket for now

- 50.** Correctly place quotation marks, commas, and end marks in the following sentences.

It's not easy to memorize all of the mathematical formulae for algebra stated Mrs. Shapiro but we'll accomplish that by the year's end

Would you make my steak sandwich without onions please asked Harry

I began Courtney am not the only girl who feels that way

Answers

If you miss any of the following questions, you may refer to the designated lesson for further explanation.

- 1.** pillow, fruit, information, razor (Lesson 1)
- 2.** knowledge, pleasure, deceit, malice, hope (Lesson 1)
- 3.** President Obama, Harvard, Sabrina, Memphis, Earth, Idaho, NBC, Pacific (Lesson 1)
- 4.** televisions, analyses, ferries, igloos, pluses, volcanoes (Lesson 2)
- 5.** not-for-profits, vote-getters, fathers-in-law, voice-overs (Lesson 2)
- 6.** horse's, doctors', bus's, teachers', children's, classes', Max's, child's, class's (Lesson 2)
- 7.** lizard/it, mice/they, Cheryl/she, you and I/we (Lesson 3)
- 8.** kites/they, Paul and I/we, fishermen/they, company/it, deer/it, deer/they (Lesson 3)
- 9.** who, whom, whoever, whose, which (Lesson 3)
- 10.** They gave me the Miss Congeniality award!
She never seems to have time to visit her old neighborhood.
We picked a lot of peaches from our trees.
(Lesson 3)
- 11.** We lent it to him.
Give me a sign.
He cooked them ravioli.
(Lesson 3)
- 12.** Andrew questioned himself about his decision to buy the treadmill.
His decision about buying the treadmill was rash.
Heather herself wondered what prompted him to buy it.
(Lesson 3)
- 13.** This isn't a good way to spend the money that you saved!
Is that the neighbor who drove you home from the airport?
(Lesson 3)
- 14.** look, talk, help, cook, draw, itch, moisten (Lesson 4)
- 15.** can, will, are, could, would, am, how, did (Lesson 4)
- 16.**

injure	lock	carry	write
untie	hide	mow	drive
know	grow	cost	throw

(Lesson 5)
- 17.** lays, lain, laid (Lesson 5)
- 18.** setting, sat, set (Lesson 5)
- 19.** may; except; hung (Lesson 5)
- 20.** **am swimming:** present progressive
had swum: past perfect
will have swum: future perfect
swam: past
have swum: present perfect
will swim: future
were swimming: past progressive
swims: present
(Lesson 6)
- 21.** laptop; longtime; popular; legendary; rock-and-roll (Lesson 7)
- 22.** a hen, an honorable person, a one-car family, an orthodontist, a honeybee, an orangutan, an ozone layer, an umbrella, an hour-long lecture, a universe, a wristwatch, an upperclassman, an elegant dinner, an underwater city, an opinion (Lesson 7)
- 23.** Greek, Mexican, Asian, Idahoan, Danish, Hawaiian, North American, Floridian, French, Washingtonian, Belgian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Mayan, British (Lesson 7)
- 24.** **my:** possessive adjective; **his:** possessive pronoun
Her: possessive adjective; **hers:** possessive pronoun
Our: possessive adjective; **theirs:** possessive pronoun
(Lesson 7)
- 25.** **That:** demonstrative adjective
those: demonstrative pronoun
This: demonstrative pronoun
(Lesson 7)

- 26.** coolest; slimier; narrowest (Lesson 7)
- 27.** most cautiously; longer; good, better (Lesson 8)
- 28. hard:** adverb; **close:** adjective; **straight:** adverb (Lessons 7 and 8)
- 29.** around the building; Without a word; to his room; around the back (Lesson 9)
- 30. around:** adverb; **over:** adverb; **across the room:** preposition (Lesson 9)
- 31.** The chef threw the roast, which was burned to a crisp, into the sink.
Crockets of onion soup dripping with cheese were served to the guests.
When Kerry was five, her parents brought her to Disney World.
(Lesson 10)
- 32.** herd/heard address/address
died/dyed coast/coast
real/reel conduct/conduct
(Lesson 10)
- 33.** Animals; Artificial intelligence; (you); Most; Mike (Lesson 11)
- 34.** played; stand; spotted (Lesson 11)
- 35. pieces:** direct object; **sheriff:** indirect object; **ovation:** direct object; **finalists:** indirect object; **time:** direct object (Lesson 11)
- 36. bad:** predicate adjective; **birds:** predicate noun; **chef:** predicate noun (Lesson 11)
- 37.** is; try; is (Lesson 12)
- 38.** goes; needs; prefers (Lesson 12)
- 39.** its; his or her; its (Lesson 12)
- 40. of the shoes:** adjective phrase; **on the far shelf:** adverb phrase; **within the hour:** adverb phrase; **from the wall:** adverb phrase (Lesson 13)
- 41. Becoming an accomplished pianist:** gerund phrase
To avoid slipping on the ice: infinitive phrase
Leaving his entire fortune to his nephew Lewis: participial phrase
(Lesson 13)
- 42.** the head of our science department; a professional tennis player; the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution
(Lesson 13)
- 43. As I said:** subordinate
I am learning ballroom dancing: independent
Here are some for you: independent
Well, I should say so: independent
That's life: independent
Stop that: independent
(Lesson 14)
- 44.** that my mom sang
at the end of the line
where they sell many exotic fruits
(Lesson 14)
- 45.** that drinking water is better than drinking soda
what time the store opens
which shoes to wear
(Lesson 14)
- 46.** Except for Tanya
Whether or not you believe it
since her grandparents would be visiting, too
(Lesson 14)
- 47. Gold or blue**
Danielle **and** Joanna; watched a movie, popped popcorn, **and** stayed up all night talking
Sometimes we go to the lake **so** we can water-ski.
(Lesson 15)
- 48. a. compound; b. compound-complex; c. simple; d. complex** (Lesson 16)
- 49.** On April 12, 1861, the Civil War began with the battle at Fort Sumter.
The dentist's hygienists and staff threw a surprise party for him.
Would you consider using Benji's or Jess's racket for now?
(Lessons 17–20)
- 50.** “It’s not easy to memorize all of the mathematical formulae for algebra,” stated Mrs. Shapiro, “but we’ll accomplish that by the year’s end.”
“Would you make my steak sandwich without onions, please?” asked Harry.
“I,” began Courtney, “am not the only girl who feels that way.”
(Lessons 17–20)