- *fewer* + count nouns and *less* + mass nouns:

*less errors* is ungrammatical, the correct formulation is *fewer errors*. However, *less time* is correct.

- the Saxon’s genitive:

*John’s mother* is the same as *the mother of John*. The *‘s* is not a contraction, so it’s allowed in formal writing: you can and should use Saxon’s genitives in your writing and this is the only proper way to do this. Alternatives such as *John his mother* are ungrammatical.

- agreements:

if the subject is singular, then the verb is singular (so the third person gets a final -s); if the subject is plural, the verb is a plural (so no final -s ever)

- *consist out of*:

this is a literal translation from the Dutch *bestaat uit*: the valid English construction is simply *to consist of*

- double negations:

if you negate the verb (e.g. I don’t want), then you must use *any*, not *no*. *I don’t want no ice-cream* is not grammatical standard English, although you may hear it in movies: the correct formulation is *I don’t want any ice-cream*, which is to be preferred to the (also grammatical but less used) *I want no ice-cream*.

- passive voice:

use it with parsimony as it may make sentences very convoluted and hard to read: prefer the active voice any time you can. It is not wrong to use the passive voice, but it makes it harder to write clear and unambiguous sentences, so if you feel unsure about your writing skills, make it easier for yourself.

- d/t endings:

extent is a noun, as in ‘*to the extent’*, while to extend is a verb, as in ‘*I extend the literature by…’*

- whereas and where:

*whereas* and *where* introduce subordinate clauses, not main clauses. Thus, a sentence like ‘*Whereas* *the study by Doe et al (2021) shows that the language faculty is innate.’* is not a valid English sentence as it lacks the main clause. On the contrary, a sentence like ‘*Whereas* *the study by Doe et al (2021) shows that the language faculty is innate, Rossi et al (2020) contend that it is emergent.’*  is well-formed: the main clause is *Rossi et al (2020) contend that it is emergent*, while the clause introduced by *whereas* is the subordinate. If you want an adversative conjunction which introduces a main clause, you can use *However*, *On the contrary*, …

- excessive use of parataxis:

parataxis is the use of short main clauses without subordinative clauses. For example, a sentence like ‘*humans "overfit" as well this is called muscle memory*’ uses parataxis but makes the sentence less readable. You can consider using a colon after *as well*, or a relative clause introduced by *which* or *that*.

- commas between subject and verb:

never, never, never place a comma between the subject and the main verb as in ‘*the dog, barked.*’. The only situation in which you should place a comma after the main subject is when you want to embed a clause between the subject and the main verb, as in ‘*The dog, who had been sleeping all day, barked.’*

- garden path sentences:

not wrong per se but they slow reading down. ‘*The student forgot the answer was in the book.’* is a valid English sentence but it is hard to read because the first interpretation is that *the answer* is the direct object of *forgot*, not the subject of a relative clause.

- excessive use of nominalisation:

Rather than writing ‘*The evaluation of the models will be carried out using accuracy’* prefer alternatives such as ‘*The models will be evaluated using accuracy.’* or ‘*We evaluated the models using accuracy.’* There is no reason to turn *evaluate* into a noun and then use a more generic verb: it is less precise and more wordy.