

Crafting an Effective Writer: Tools of the Trade



*Learn to become an effective builder of sentences
using the basic tools of grammar, punctuation, and writing.*

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This book contains all of the reading content presented
in the Coursera MOOC of the same title presented by
Mt. San Jacinto College.



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The Parts of Speech

In this unit you will learn the eight basic parts of speech and how they function in English. To become a better writer and editor of your writing, you should know the fundamentals of English prose and how they work in a sentence because once you understand the components of a sentence, you can begin to examine your writing critically to identify problems and make corrections rather than just guessing at why something is wrong.

Learning the foundations of grammar is similar to building a house. One of the first activities you must perform in building a house is to lay the foundation and frame your house. The foundation and frame will support the rest of the house, the drywall, the flooring, the wiring, etc. A good frame will help ensure a solid, well-built home. The parts of speech are similar. Your writing is based on the categories of words that comprise the eight parts of speech. The better your understanding of the eight parts of speech the better foundation and frame you will have when you write and edit.

For this module, the eight parts of speech are broken into three sections: (1) Nouns, Pronouns, and Adjectives, (2) Verbs and Adverbs, and (3) Prepositions, Conjunctions, and Interjections. After each section there will be an exercise that will allow you to practice what you have learned. After the exercises, you will have the opportunity to take a quiz to see how well you understand the different parts of speech.

In this section you will learn the eight main parts of speech and how they function in English. Understanding the basic building blocks of an English sentence will allow you not only to compose English sentences logically and correctly but also to edit your writing confidently.

Parts of Speech

1. Nouns
2. Pronouns
 - a. Subject
 - b. Object
 - c. Indefinite
 - d. Relative
 - e. Demonstrative
 - f. Possessive
 - g. Interrogative
 - h. Reflexive
 - i. Intensive
3. Adjectives
 - a. Articles
4. Verbs
 - a. Action
 - b. Linking
 - c. Helping
5. Adverbs
6. Conjunctions
7. Prepositions
8. Interjections

Nouns, Pronouns, and Adjectives

- **Nouns** are a part of speech typically denoting a person, place, thing, animal or idea.
 - **Pronouns** are words that stand in for or replace nouns.
 - **Adjectives** are words you use to modify a noun or a pronoun.
-

NOUNS

Nouns can be grouped into five categories: (1) persons, (2) places, (3) things, (4) living creatures, and (5) ideas/concepts. Below are some examples for each category.

1. **Persons** includes a sister, a grandmother, John, the teacher, fire fighter, Aunt May, a neighbor, the friend, Hoon, a boss, the colleague, a peer, the individual, and Nelson Mandela.
2. **Places** can be a school, Texas, a home, a store, Japan, a room, a stadium, the desert, a cave, Australia, a state, Veracruz, and a drawer.
3. **Things** can comprise the Statue of Liberty, a car, a computer, a cup, the Great Sphinx, a stapler, a pen or pencil, a fence, a cell phone, and the Oxford English Dictionary.
4. **Living creatures** are a lion, a Bengal tiger, a dog, a pig, a Siamese cat, a horse, a dolphin, a caterpillar, a Monarch butterfly, a vole, an American Robin, and a yak.
5. **Ideas and concepts** include Buddhism, love, freedom, money, time, the Declaration of Independence, marriage, religion, and Hinduism.

In reading through the lists of nouns, you noticed that some of the nouns are capitalized and others are not. In addition of being a person, place, thing, living creature, or concept, nouns can be **common** and **proper**. Common nouns are not capitalized. Proper nouns are capitalized.

So while the nouns **adult, country, pastry, dog,** and **disease** are *common nouns*, the nouns **Mother Teresa, Latvia, Buche de Noel, Basenji,** and **Ebola** are all *proper nouns*.

PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words that stand in for or replace nouns. There are nine categories of pronouns: (1) Subject Pronouns (2) Objective Pronouns, (3) Indefinite Pronouns, (4) Relative Pronouns, (5) Demonstrative Pronouns, (6) Possessive Pronouns, (7) Interrogative Pronouns, (8) Reflexive Pronouns, (9) Intensive Pronouns.

SUBJECT PRONOUNS include **I, you, he, she, it, we,** and **they**. As their name implies, subject pronouns always function as subjects of a sentence.

Number	Person	Case (subjective)
Singular	1st	I
	2nd	You
	3rd	She He It
Plural	1st	We
	2nd	You
	3rd	They

This category of subject pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the pronouns listed are the complete set. No changes or additions exist.

Below are sentences that use each of the subject pronouns as subjects.

Singular

- I ate the last piece of pizza.
- You are a very fast runner.
- She left a book in my car.
- He bought a hamburger.
- It had begun to rain.

Plural

- **We** always work together.
- **You** get bonuses every month.
- **They** joined the choir.

OBJECTIVE PRONOUNS include **me, you, him, her, it, us,** and **them**. Objective pronouns always function as objects in a sentence, for example, the direct object, the indirect object, or the object of a preposition.

Number	Person	Case (objective)
Singular	1st	Me
	2nd	You
	3rd	Him Her It
Plural	1st	Us
	2nd	You
	3rd	Them

This category of object pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the pronouns listed are the complete set. No changes or additions occur.

Below are sentences that use each of the object pronouns as different types of objects.

Singular

- She gave the award to me. (indirect object)
- I baked that batch of cookies sitting near you. (object of the preposition near)
- Mr. Jones met him for lunch. (direct object)
- He picked out flowers especially for her. (indirect object)
- Open the door and walk through it. (object of the preposition)

Plural

- The usher led us to our seats. (direct object)
- The company sent the merchandise directly to you. (indirect object)
- The teacher gave them more time to finish the quiz. (indirect object)

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS can function as either subjects or objects. Also, they can be singular or plural or both (depending on the context in which they are used). The reason this is most important is because the number of the pronoun determines the number of the verb to be used, which you will study in the next unit. Singular indefinite pronouns use singular verbs. Plural indefinite pronouns use plural verbs.

- Indefinite pronouns that end in –one are always singular. These words include anyone, everyone, someone, and one.
- Indefinite pronouns that end in –body are always singular. These words include anybody, somebody, and nobody.
- Indefinite pronouns like both, many, others, and several are always plural.
- Indefinite pronouns like any, more, most, and some can be singular or plural, depending on how they are used.

Singular Indefinite	Plural Indefinite	Singular or Plural
Another	both	all
anyone	few	any
each	many	more
everyone	others	most
everybody	several	none
everything		some
much		
nobody		
nothing		
other		
someone		
anybody		
anything		
either		
little		
neither		
no one		
somebody		
something		

This category of indefinite pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the pronouns listed are the complete set. No changes or additions exist.

Below are several examples of the indefinite pronouns as both subjects and objects.

- Everyone seems to have a social media account. (subject)
- Cheryl gave the tomato seed packages to everyone who attended. (object)
- Somebody needs to dust the furniture and mop the floor. (subject)
- We gave the boxes to somebody at the shop. (object)

Below are sentence examples of singular and plural indefinite pronouns.

- Most of the pie has been eaten. (Singular)
- Most of the pies have been eaten. (Plural)
- None of the light enters the bedroom. (Singular)
- None of the lights seem to be working. (Plural)
- Both of the men run quickly out of the room. (Plural)
- Several of the children play hop-scotch during recess. (Plural)

RELATIVE PRONOUNS include, most commonly, **that, which, who, whom, whoever, whomever,** and **where**. Relative pronouns introduce relative clauses, which will be reviewed later.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS include **This, That, These,** and **Those** and can function as subjects, objects, and adjectives.

Number	Near in Distance or Time	Far in Distance or Time
Singular	This	That
Plural	These	Those

This category of demonstrative pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. No changes or additions occur.

Below are several examples of sentences using demonstrative pronouns as subjects.

- This is the best place to park.
- These are the strawberries that are on sale.
- That really got to me.
- Those fell off the truck.

The following sentences use demonstrative pronouns as objects.

- "Get as close as you can to that," he stated, pointing to the loading dock.
- "I want a handful of these," she laughed picking up the strawberries.

Below are two sentences that use demonstrative pronouns as adjectives.

- I need a picture of those flowers.
- This phone is the one I truly want.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS are pronouns used to refer to subjects in sentences that are specific person/people or thing/things belonging to a person/people [and sometimes to an animal(s) or thing(s)]. Possessive pronouns function as subjects, objects, and adjectives.

Number	Person	Possessive Pronoun
Singular	1st	My/Mine
	2nd	Your/Yours
	3rd	His Her/Hers Its
Plural	1st	Our/Ours
	2nd	Your/Yours
	3rd	Their/Theirs

This category of possessive pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. No changes or additions exist.

Following are sentences that use possessive pronouns as subjects.

Singular

- Mine is the last cake on the table.
- Yours was left in the car.
- Hers came with the card attached.
- His was a mighty blow.

Plural

- **Ours** describe ways others might interpret art.
- **Yours** were the last to arrive.
- **Theirs** won first place.

Sentence examples using possessive pronouns as objects include.

- That backpack looks like mine.
- The restaurant's bouillabaisse tastes similar to ours.

The following examples use possessive pronouns as adjectives.

- That is my seat in which you are sitting.
- Your seat is at the end of the row.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS are used to ask questions. These pronouns represent the thing that isn't known (what the question is asking about). Interrogative pronouns can stand in for subjects.

If the Subject is a ...	Use this pronoun...
Person	Who
Thing	What
Person/thing	Which
Person	Whose

This category of interrogative pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

The sentences below use interrogative pronouns as subjects.

- Who borrowed my pencil?
- What is the name of the café'?
- Which seems to be the most popular?
- Whose is the red blanket?

REFLEXIVE AND INTENSIVE PRONOUNS each use the same forms.

Number	Person	Reflexive Pronoun	Intensive Pronoun
Singular	1st	Myself	Myself
	2nd	Yourself	Yourself
	3rd	Himself Herself Itself	Himself Herself Itself
Plural	1st	Ourselves	Ourselves
	2nd	Yourselves	Yourselves
	3rd	Themselves	Themselves

This category of pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

Reflexive pronouns function as objects in a sentence; they refer back to a noun or pronoun.

Below are two sentences using reflexive pronouns as objects.

- He enjoyed painting the shed himself.
- Chandra and Wallace wanted to prepare the meal themselves.

Intensive pronouns emphasize another noun or pronoun. See the following examples.

- You **yourself** will be responsible for the delivery.
- Raul and I **ourselves** seem to be the only people who want to hike the gorge.

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words you use to modify a noun or a pronoun. In this section you will learn about three categories of adjectives: (1) descriptive adjectives, (2) proper adjectives, and (3) predicate adjectives.

DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVES describes a quality of the noun the adjective modifies.

- **large** house
 - **frigid** night
 - **wide** gorge
 - **purple** plum
 - **green** truck
 - **blissful** sleep
-

PROPER ADJECTIVES are formed by using a proper noun.

- **French** pastry
 - **Shakespearian** play
 - **Jeffersonian** democracy
 - **African** dance
-

PREDICATE ADJECTIVES follow the noun and are connected to the noun by a linking verb, which you will learn about in the next module. In the following examples, the predicate adjective follows the highlighted linking verb (linking verbs are discussed in the next segment):

- She **seems** brave.
- The bread **is** stale.
- He **looks** bored.
- The trash **smells** unpleasant.

The three articles in English, **a**, **an**, and **the** (sometimes referred to as determiners) always function as adjectives in a sentence.

Verbs and Adverbs

- **Verbs** show what the subject of a sentence does.
 - **Adverbs** modify and describe verbs, adjective, and other adverbs.
-

VERBS

A verb shows what the subject of a sentence does. You can group verbs into three general categories: (1) Action Verbs, (2) Linking or State of Being Verbs, (3) Helping or Auxiliary Verbs

ACTION VERBS, which make up the majority of verbs, show/demonstrate an action.

- The phone **rang** loudly.
 - They **dance** well together.
 - The little girl **laughed** joyfully.
 - The team **plays** aggressively.
-

LINKING OR STATE OF BEING VERBS do not show an action. These verbs explain the condition someone or something is in.

- The teacher **is** ill.
- I **am** tall and beautiful.
- The sister **became** class president.
- The cat **seems** agitated by the attention.

HELPING OR AUXILIARY VERBS help describe the main verb. There are nine helping verbs that are always helping verbs; they are never the main verb. These helping verbs are:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. May | 6. Should |
| 2. Might | 7. Can |
| 3. Must | 8. Will |
| 4. Could | 9. Shall |
| 5. Would | |

Study the following sentences. The helping verb is in bold and the main verb is highlighted. Helping verbs add degrees of difference to the main verb allowing you to make subtle distinctions.

- The bowl **should** hold all the ingredients.
- The bowl **might** hold all the ingredients.
- The bowl **must** hold all the ingredients.
- The bowl **will** hold all the ingredients.
- The bowl **can** hold all the ingredients.

Together, the helping verb and the main verb are called the complete verb.

There are three verbs, **be**, **do**, and **have**, that can be either main verbs or helping verbs depending upon their usage. The forms of these three verbs that can be either main or helping verbs are:

Be	Do	Have
Is		
Are		
Was	Does	Has
Were	Did	Had
Being		
Been		

Again, study the sentences below. In the first three, a form of **be**, **do**, and **have** is used as a main verb. In the second three sentences, the same form of **be**, **do**, and **have** is used as a helping verb.

Main verb

- She **was** a fearsome giant.
- He **does** the dishes immediately after dinner.
- They **have** a llama for a pet.

Helping verb

- The child **was** fed by his sister.
- She **does** call whenever necessary.
- They have danced for fourteen hours straight.

ADVERBS

Adverbs modify and describe verbs, adjective, and other adverbs.

- They walked **quickly** to the store.
(**quickly** modifies the verb **walked**)
- The child played **happily** at the beach.
(**happily** modifies the verb **played**)
- The child sat **nervously** outside the principal's office.
(**nervously** modifies the verb **sat**)
- A **largely** green parrot flew up into the tree.
(**largely** modifies the adjective **green**)
- The snow fell **very** heavily.
(**very** modifies the adverb **heavily**)

While most adverbs end with the suffix **-ly**, some adverbs do not. Below are some common adverbs that do not end in **-ly**.

Quite
So
Not
Never
Often
Well
Soon
Always
Less
Very
Often
Also

And some adjectives end in **-ly**. Here are some common-**ly** ending adjectives.

Lovely
Lonely
Friendly
Ugly
Womanly
Manly
Deadly
Neighborly

Prepositions, Conjunctions, and Interjections

- **Prepositions** are words that connect nouns and pronouns to other words and show the relationship between the words.
- **Conjunctions** are words that link other words in a sentence and indicate the relationship between those words.
- **Interjections** express surprise, emotion, or demand attention.

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words that connect nouns and pronouns to other words and show the relationship between the words. While there are hundreds of prepositions, some of the more common prepositions are:

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

Even though knowing individual prepositions is important, you will use **prepositional phrases** far more frequently. A prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun and includes any words that come in between the two. Study the examples below.

- in the village
- despite the extensive remodeling project
- underneath the grey blanket
- near him
- between you and me
- with her

Note how each phrase above begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun. You will learn more about prepositional phrases as well as other phrases later.

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are words that link other words in a sentence and indicate the relationship between those words. There are four types of conjunctions: (1) coordinating conjunctions, (2) correlative conjunctions, (3) adverbial conjunctions, (4) subordinating conjunctions

You will study conjunctions again when you study the different types of clauses. But for now, learn the four types of conjunctions as subcategories of one of the eight parts of speech.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS join words or word groups of equal importance.

There are only seven coordinating conjunctions:

Use the memory word **FANBOYS to help you remember all seven coordinating conjunctions.*

1. **For**
2. **And**
3. **Nor**
4. **But**
5. **Or**
6. **Yet**
7. **So**

Examples

- The child was crying, **for** he had fallen and scraped both knees.
- The man **and** the woman walked hand and hand down the street.
- The Tan's did not wish to visit Alaska, **nor** did they wish to visit Tierra del Fuego.
- She likes tea **but** not coffee.
- The student could play **or** study, **but** not both.
- The young man ate breakfast, **yet** he was still hungry.
- The game ended, **so** the team left the field.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS are word pairs that join words or words groups of equal importance.

Common correlative conjunctions include:

- **not only . . . but also**
- **whether . . . or**
- **both . . . and**
- **not . . . but**
- **either . . . or**
- **as . . . as**
- **neither . . . nor**

Examples

- They want to travel **not only** to Europe **but also** to Asia.
- I want **either** the red dress **or** the black shoes.
- I want **both** the red dress **and** the black shoes.
- **Whether** you clean your room **or** vacuum the house is up to you.

ADVERBIAL CONJUNCTIONS, unlike coordinating conjunctions and correlative conjunctions that link words and word groups, they join independent clauses, which you will study later.

Adverbial conjunctions tell the reader the relationship between the two main clauses. Below are common adverbial conjunctions organized by the relationship they specify.

Addition	Emphasis	Comparison or Contrast	Cause or Effect	Time
in addition furthermore moreover further	in fact indeed	however nevertheless nonetheless otherwise in contrast in comparison	as a result consequently hence therefore thus	finally meanwhile next

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS are a word or group of words that introduces a subordinate clause, which you will study in Week 4.

Below are common subordinating conjunctions organized by the relationship they specify.

Cause or Effect	Concession	Condition	Comparison or Contrast	Purpose	Space or Time
as because since	though although even though even if	if since unless when whenever	while as rather than	in order that so that	before since once after while when until

Study these charts, for you will be referring to them throughout the course. You should become familiar with these words and the corresponding organizational relationship. They will help you to improve your thought and sentences as you write.

INTERJECTIONS

Interjections, the last part of speech, express surprise, emotion, or demand attention.

- **Amen!**
- **Wow!**
- **Hey!**
- **Absolutely!**
- **Bless you!**
- **Ouch!**
- **Damn!**

You should avoid using interjections in formal academic prose. Insert interjections in more informal writing or when you are writing dialogue.

Parts of Speech at Work

Before you begin reading this section, take a few moments to copy down or print this list of symbols that will be used to identify parts of speech in sentences we will be working with throughout this unit.

Part of Speech/Sentence	Symbol	Part of Speech/Sentence	Symbol
Subject	S	Adverb	ADV
Verb	V	Prepositional Phrase	Prep P
Noun	N	Conjunction	C
Pronoun	P	Interjection	INT
Adjective/determiner	ADJ		

The sentences that you will learn to write in this course will contain many words from the eight parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives/determiners, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections). What is even more important is that the words categorized as the eight parts of speech can do many different “jobs” in the sentences you create. The box below illustrates some of the work these elements can do for you.

Parts of Speech	Jobs They Perform in Sentences
Nouns, pronouns	Subjects (the actor/who/what) and Objects (receive the action of the actor)
Verbs	Verbs (describe the action of the actor)
Adjectives, adverbs, prepositions	Modifiers (add details and description)
Conjunctions	Conjunctions (link sentences, words)
Interjections	Interjections (exclamations)

Each part of speech, as you can see, corresponds to one or more of the writing jobs it can do. They are all really hard workers when it comes to creating sentences.

There is one more significant thing to know about the relationship between the eight parts of speech and sentences. Just as the parts of speech can do various jobs in sentences, words that make up the eight parts of speech can also multitask. In fact, many of the words in the English language can be more than one part of speech, as you already know, and can do a variety of jobs in sentences. Look at the following examples.

Word	Part of Speech	Sentences
bubbles	Noun	The bubbles floated up and away.
	verb	Water bubbles when it begins to boil.
up(s)	adverb	He climbed up to the top of the ladder.
	preposition	They went up the stairs.
	adjective	The up elevator is on the left.
	noun	She has had more ups than downs lately.
well	interjection	Well! I don't believe it!
	adverb	The teacher spoke well of the student.
	adjective	My friend is well .
daily	noun	The daily arrives at 3:00 pm.
	adjective	Daily attendance is a requirement.
	adverb	He called her cell phone daily .

And these examples are just four of tens of thousands of words that multitask in this way. Learning the parts of speech and how they function will help you be a better writer and editor.

But, rest assured, once you have a firm grasp of English based on the descriptions of it you find here, you will better understand that this ability words have to do so many things helps to make the English language very rich and very flexible and very descriptive.

Now that you can see all of the roles English words can play in sentence structures, creating sentences for writing will become much easier for you.

For example, the noun and verb **SEALS PERFORMED** create a complete sentence.

Now add the adjective **the**:

The	seals	performed.
ADJ	N	V

Add another adjective that describes the color of the seals:

The	black	seals	performed.
ADJ	ADJ	N	V

The verb, **performed**, doesn't really describe the actions of the seals. Try a verb that better describes the seals' actions:

The	black	seals	leaped
ADJ	ADJ	N	V

Leaped better describes the seals' action. Writing and reading would be rather dull if there weren't verbs that described action. In fact, sentences sometimes contain multiple descriptive verbs. Look at the following sentence.

The	black	seals	leaped,	slid,	and	barked
ADJ	ADJ	N	V	V	C	V

Look at how this sentence gains energy and vitality when action verbs are added. (Do note that adding additional verbs also means adding commas and the conjunction **and**.)

There is one more thing you can do to make this sentence even more dynamic. Add adverbs and prepositional phrases to give additional details about the verbs.

The	black	seals	leaped	eagerly	out	of the water,
ADJ	ADJ	N	V	ADV	ADV	Prep P
slid	quickly	upon the deck,	and	barked	noisily	at the spectators.
V	ADV	Prep P	C	V	ADV	Prep P

By adding adverbs (words and phrases that modify verbs) to the sentence, you create a sentence that is even more specific and visual.

Now, add several adjectives. Remember adjectives are words used to add descriptive details to nouns and can be inserted in prepositional phrases.

The	sleek	black	seals	in the pool	leaped
ADJ	ADJ	ADJ	N	Prep P	V
eagerly	out	of the shimmering water,	slid	quickly	upon the wooden deck around the pool,
ADV	ADV	Prep P	V	ADV	Prep P
and	barked	noisily	at the stunned spectators	in the half-empty bleachers.	
C	V	ADV	Prep P	Prep P	

Remember, this sentence began as **SEALS PERFORMED**.

A sprinkling of action verbs and their attending adverbs, as well as a few adjectives and prepositional phrases turned this sentence into an event. As you begin to experiment with expanding sentences in this way, your writing will become **word pictures** that readers will be able to visualize.

Subjects and Verbs

In Unit 2, you learned about the eight parts of speech and how these word categories are the basic building materials of sentences. Understanding the grammatical roles these parts of speech play will help you make good choices when composing

- sentences
- paragraphs
- multi-paragraph compositions

Subjects and verbs make up all sentences. Of course, there are certain guidelines that must be followed when creating sentences. At the very least, sentences must have one subject, one verb, and punctuation. In addition, they must be complete thoughts. These basic sentence structures can be more easily understood by examining their base parts:

Subjects	Words that identify the actor in a sentence or tell what/who a sentence is about.
Verbs	Words that either describe what action the actor is doing or provide a link to the condition/state of being of the subject.
Punctuation	Symbols that tell readers when a sentence ends.

All sentences contain at least one subject and one verb. Sentences that contain a single subject and a single verb are called simple sentences. Recall the sentence **Seals Perform** from **PARTS OF SPEECH AT WORK** in the last section. The sentence has one subject and one verb:

Seals perform.

Seals is the subject; **seals** identifies the actor or who this sentence is about. **Perform** is the verb; **perform** describes what action the actor is doing. And the two words create a

In this section, you will learn how nouns, pronouns, and verbs function as subjects and verbs of sentences. You will also learn about regular and irregular verbs, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, active and passive voice, and terminal punctuation.

A. Subjects

1. Nouns
2. Pronouns
 - a. Personal
 - b. Demonstrative
 - c. Possessive
 - d. Interrogative
 - e. Indefinite
3. Understood "You"
4. Gerunds
5. Infinitives

B. Verbs

1. Action and Linking Verbs
 - a. Action
 - b. Linking
 - c. Helping
2. Regular and Irregular Verbs
3. Verb Tense
4. Subject-Verb Agreement
5. Active and Passive Voice

C. Terminal Punctuation

1. Period
2. Exclamation Mark
3. Question Mark

meaningful, complete thought. In addition to containing a single subject and a single verb, simple sentences can also contain one subject and multiple verbs **OR** multiple subjects and one verb **OR** multiple subjects and multiple verbs. Look at the sentences below.

One subject and one verb:	Children play.
Two subjects and one verb:	Basketballs and volleyballs bounce.
One subject and two verbs:	Sharks swim and hunt.
Two subjects and two verbs:	Juan and Alex talk and laugh.

Of course, simple sentences like these aren't the types of sentences that you will find in academic and professional writing, mostly because they don't provide readers much information. However, simple sentences are a good place to start. Understanding what creates simple sentences is important because you can eventually expand them so that you can use the expanded sentences in your writing.

Subjects

All sentences must have an **actor**, the “**who or what**” a sentence is about. The subject in a sentence is that actor. Most of the time, you can find the subject/actor of a sentence somewhere near the beginning of a sentence. The subject/actor is also usually in front of the verb in the sentence. To locate a subject/actor, ask yourself who or what the sentence is about.

Margie walked to the store.

If you ask who this sentence is about, the answer is **Margie**. So the subject of this sentence is **Margie**.

Also, if you can find the verb in a sentence, you can ask who is doing the action the verb describes. For this sentence, ask who is **walking** to the store. Again, the answer is Margie.

Finally, the subject, Margie, is close to the front of the sentence, and it comes before the verb.

Nouns make great subjects in sentences, but they are not the only words that can work as subjects. Subjects can also come from other parts of speech and word combinations. The list below identifies the parts of speech and word forms that provide us with sentence subjects.

- Nouns (part of speech)
 - **Trains** are still a popular form of transport.
 - **Books** lined the back wall.
- Pronouns (part of speech)
 - **She** left the building at closing time.
 - **They** often gather in the courtyard.
- The “understood” subject (**you**, a pronoun, is the “understood” subject)
 - Please, go to the store.
 - Bring me a glass of tea.
- Gerunds (formed by adding **-ing** to a verb: swimming, driving, learning, jogging, writing)
 - **Swimming** provides cardiovascular exercise.
 - **Driving** in Los Angeles can be very dangerous.
 - **Learning** is inspirational.
- Infinitives (the preposition **to** + a **verb**: to swim, to drive, to learn, to exercise, to agree)
 - **To swim** is always a choice.
 - **To drive** can be quite nerve-wracking.
 - **To learn** is a challenge I enjoy.

NOUNS:

As you recall from before, the part of speech called nouns encompasses thousands of words used to name persons, places, things, living creatures, and ideas.

Because nouns identify the persons, places, things, living creatures, and ideas in our environment, this part of speech often provides subjects for sentences. Nouns do an excellent job of acting out the answer to the who/what question used to identify the subject of a sentence.

PRONOUNS:

Pronouns, which you studied in Unit 2, can also act as subjects because they stand in for nouns. The types of pronouns that can function as subjects include personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, and indefinite pronouns.

Personal Pronoun	We quickly ate the caramel gelato.
Demonstrative Pronoun	Those are the shoes from the store.
Interrogative Pronoun	Who told you that story?
Indefinite Pronoun	Everyone enjoys writing well.

Another type of pronoun, the relative pronoun, can function as a subject in subordinate clauses, which you will study in the next section.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS have distinct characteristics, including number, person, gender, and case. They also have the characteristic of being part of a closed group. In other words, no changes or additions will be made to this group. The pronouns **I, you, he, she, it, we,** and **they** are all of the personal pronouns that act as subjects.

1. **Number:** This term simply means singular (I, he, she) or plural (we, they). In other words, if the noun being represented is singular, choose a singular pronoun. If the noun(s) being represented is plural, choose a plural pronoun.
2. **Person:** This term refers to your point of view. You use 1st person when you are speaking (I, we); you use 2nd person when you are speaking directly to the reader (you); you use 3rd person when you are speaking about someone or something else (he, she, it, they).
3. **Gender:** This term identifies whether the pronoun represents a subject that is male (he), female (she), or neuter (it).
4. **Case:** This term refers to the two distinct case classifications of personal pronouns. Case determines how the pronoun is to be used. Subjective case means that the pronoun can be used as a subject in a sentence. (Objective case means the pronoun can be used as a direct object or other object field.)

The following table identifies personal pronouns that can substitute for nouns as subjects in sentences and how to choose the appropriate pronoun form:

Number	Person	Gender	Case (Subjective)
Singular	1st	Female/male	I
	2nd	Female/male	You
	3rd	Female	She
		Male	He
		Neuter	It
Plural	1st	Female/male	We
	2nd	Female/male	You
	3rd	Female/male/neuter	They

This category is a closed category. In other words, the pronouns listed in the table are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

The sentences below use personal pronouns as subjects.

Singular

- **I** ate the last piece of pizza.
- **You** are a very fast runner.
- **She** left a book in my car.
- **He** bought a hamburger.
- **It** had begun to rain.

Plural

- **We** always work together.
- **You** get bonuses every month.
- **They** joined the choir.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS can also be used as subjects in sentences. The next table identifies and describes how to use demonstrative pronouns as subjects. Demonstrative pronouns have only two characteristics: they represent number (one item or more than one item) and describe whether these items are near in distance or time OR far in distance or time.

Demonstrative Pronouns that can be used as Subjects		
Number	Near in Distance or Time	Far in Distance or Time
Singular	This	That
Plural	These	Those

This category of demonstrative pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

The sentences below use demonstrative pronouns as subjects.

- **This** is the best place to park.
- **These** are the figs and pistachios that are on sale.
- **That** really got to me.
- **Those** fell off the truck.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS are pronouns used to refer to subjects in sentences that are a specific person/people or thing/things **belonging** to a person/people (and sometimes to an animal(s) or thing(s)). These pronouns have three characteristics: **number**, **person**, and **gender**. In addition, possessive pronouns can be used as **subjects** and/or **objects**.

Possessive Pronouns that can be used as Subjects			
Number	Person	Gender of Owner	Possessive Pronouns
Singular	1st	Female/male	My/Mine
	2nd	Female/male	Your/Yours
	3rd	Female	Her/Hers
		Male	His
		Neuter	Its
Plural	1st	Female/male	Our/Ours
	2nd	Female/male	Your/Yours
	3rd	Female/male/neuter	Their/Theirs

This category of possessive pronouns is a closed category. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

Singular

- **Mine** is the last score on the table.
- **Yours** was left in the car.
- **Hers** came with the card attached.
- **His** was a mighty blow.

Plural

- **Ours** describe ways others might interpret art.
- **Yours** were the last to arrive.
- **Theirs** won first place.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS are used to ask questions. These pronouns represent the person or item that isn't known (who or what the question is asking about). Interrogative pronouns can stand in for subjects.

Interrogative Pronouns that can be used as Subjects	
If the Subject is a	Use the pronoun
Person	Who
Thing	What
Person/thing	Which
Person	Whose

This category of interrogative pronouns is a **closed category**. In other words, the ones listed are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

The sentences below use interrogative pronouns as subjects.

- **Who** borrowed my pencil?
- **What** will happen tomorrow?
- **Which** seems to be the most popular?
- **Whose** is the red blanket?

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS complete the list of pronouns that can act as subjects in sentences. Indefinite pronouns have really only two characteristics that need to be considered when using them as subjects; they can be **singular** or **plural** (or both depending on the context in which they are used) since they share the characteristic of **number**. The concept of singularity or plurality is important because the number of the pronoun determines the number of the verb you will use. Singular indefinite pronouns use singular verbs. Plural indefinite pronouns use plural verbs.

- Indefinite pronouns that end in **-one** are always **singular**. These words include anyone, everyone, someone, and one.
- Indefinite pronouns that end in **-body** are always **singular**. These words include anybody, somebody, and nobody.
- Indefinite pronouns like **both**, **many**, **others**, and **several** are always **plural**.
- Indefinite pronouns like **any**, **more**, **most**, and **some** can be **singular or plural**, depending on how they are used.

Indefinite Pronouns that can be used as Subjects		
Singular Indefinite	Plural Indefinite	Singular or Plural
another anyone each everyone everything much nobody nothing someone anybody anything either little no one somebody something	both few many others several	all any more most none some

This category is a closed category. In other words, the indefinite pronouns listed are the complete set. There will be no changes or additions.

THE “UNDERSTOOD YOU”

The “Understood You” occurs when you give a command or order to someone or suggest something to someone. These sentences are unique in that the subjects of these sentences are not written. Instead, the subject is said to be an “understood subject.” Consider the following sentences:

- Go to your room.
- Drink the rest of your milk.
- Wash your hands and face, please.

As you can see, there is no written subject for these sentences. Ask yourself, “Who is this about?” and “Who is the actor?” The answer has to be to whomever the sentence is directed. The most obvious answer is “You.”

- **You** go to your room.
- **You** drink the rest of your milk.
- **You** wash your hands and face, please.

When you compare the two sets of sentences, you can see that you do not need to write the subjects because the pronoun, **you, is understood as the actor in each one.**

GERUNDS

A gerund is a word formed by adding the suffix –ing to a verb. Words that are formed in this way usually represent activities—either physical or mental. Examples include running, eating, thinking, wishing, and herding. Gerunds act like nouns, and nouns are the most common kind of sentence subjects. Therefore, gerunds can act as subjects, too. Consider the following sentences.

- **Running** the Inca Trail near Machu Picchu can be arduous.
- **Eating** keeps my body fueled.
- **Thinking** critically is a way to exercise the brain.
- **Wishing** won’t get you anywhere.
- **Herding** cattle on the Pampas of Argentina can be hard work.

To determine the subjects for these sentences, ask, “‘Who or what’ are these sentences about?” The answers come easily. These sentences are about **running, eating, thinking, wishing, and herding.**

INFINITIVES

Like gerunds, infinitives are also made by using verbs. Infinitives are composed of the preposition **to + verb**. Infinitives represent future or abstract activities that have not yet happened. The following examples may help to clarify this:

- **To fly** over the Andes was his dream.
- **To enter** the Basílica de la Sagrada Familia in Barcelona would require a long wait in line.
- **To learn** a second language is her main goal.
- **To wait** in the rain and wind seemed silly.

The first two examples are actual representations that may happen in the future. The last two examples are abstract ideas that also have not yet happened. And just like with gerunds, simply ask the “who or what” question to determine the subject. For example, “Who or what was his dream?” “Who or what would require a long wait in line?” “Who or what is her main goal?” “Who or what seemed silly?”

Verbs

As you are learning in this section, sentences are complete thoughts that need three things: (1) subject, (2) verb, (3) punctuation.

Now that you've studied subjects and the role they play in sentences, you will study verbs to see what role they play in sentences. Verbs can perform many functions.

Verbs describe action or link another part of speech to the subject to indicate the state of being/condition of the subject.

Since verbs denote action or link a noun, pronoun, adjective, or a phrase to the subject, verbs are the words that describe what the subjects in sentences are doing or what state of being or condition they are in. Look at these five sentences:

The man jumps for joy. (**jumps** denotes action)



The man is my father. (**is** links **father**, a noun, to **man**)



The man is he. (**is** links **he**, a subject pronoun, to **man**)



The man is joyful. (**is** links **joyful**, an adjective, to **man**)



The man is in the living room. (**is** links **in the living room**, a prepositional phrase, to **man**)



Without verbs, these sentences would make no sense, as the **actors** (the subjects in sentences) would not have anything to do or to be.

Verbs describe what the subject of a sentence **does** or what the subject of the sentence **is**. To better understand the difference between verbs that denote action and verbs that denote condition or a state of being, carefully read and study the information below.

ACTION VERBS make up the majority of verbs. Action verbs, like nouns, are considered an open category because new ones emerge and old ones change all the time. For example, the abbreviation MOOC, which stands for Massive Open Online Course, can be used as a noun: "I'm enrolled in a MOOC." But you could also use the abbreviation as a verb: "Please, don't bother me right now; I am moocing." There are hundreds and hundreds of these words that show an action. Below are just a few examples:

- The phone **rang** loudly in the den.
- They **dance** the Tango well together.
- The little girl **laughed** joyfully at the scene.
- The team **plays** aggressively all the time.
- His cell phone **dropped** unexpectedly into the water.
- The couple happily **smiles** at each other.
- The child **slurps** his drink quickly and noisily.
- The father **sits** silently in the darkened living room.
- The children **chase** the dog around the yard.
- My computer **crashed** last night around midnight.

You see how each verb in these sentences describes an action performed by the subject.

LINKING VERBS are few in number and are considered a closed category, like the pronouns. Instead of denoting action, a linking verb connects the subject of a sentence to additional information about the subject, such as the condition or state of being of the subject. Look at the examples below. The linking verb is in **bold** in each sentence.

- The teacher **feels** ill.
- The dogs **sound** lonely.
- The food **tastes** salty.
- The cats **seem** agitated by the attention.
- I **appear** short in that photo.
- Your perfume **smells** lovely.
- The bottles **remain** unopened.
- The woman **is** my mother-in-law.
- The flowers outside my window **grow** taller each day.

Each verb **links** the subject to information that comes after the verb.

There are several linking verbs that are true linking verbs, for they can only be linking verbs, and there are several verbs that can be linking verbs or action verbs. Because linking verbs are a closed category, a complete list of them is possible. Below is a largely complete list.

May Be Linking Verbs (but can also show action)	Always Linking Verbs
<p>feel</p> <p>grow</p> <p>look</p> <p>appear</p> <p>remain</p> <p>smell</p> <p>sound</p> <p>stay</p> <p>taste</p> <p>turn</p> <p>prove</p>	<p>be (and all its forms)</p> <p>become</p> <p>seem</p>

A simple test exists that you can use to determine whether or not a verb is a linking verb. If you can replace the verb in a sentence with the words **am**, **is**, or **are**, and the sentence still makes sense, then the verb is a linking verb. If you replace the verb with **am**, **is**, or **are**, and it **does not** make sense, then the verb is an action verb.

Try this. Replace the **bolded** verb in each of the sentences below with the words **am**, **is**, or **are**.

1. The teacher **feels** ill.
2. The dogs **sound** lonely.
3. The food **tastes** salty.
4. The cats **seem** agitated by the attention.
5. I **appear** short in that photo.
6. Your perfume **smells** lovely.

Notice how the sentences still make sense? If the sentence still sounds logical, then you know the verb is a linking verb.

Now replace the bolded verbs in the sentences below with **am**, **is** or **are**.

1. Mom always **tastes** her food before she serves it.
2. I **smell** smoke in the air.
3. He **felt** the sides of the box for an opening.
4. They **proved** the oil pipeline leaked.
5. The family **stays** home to eat dinner together.
6. Juan and Tan **grow** flowers outside their window.

Writers make good use of linking verbs, especially those verbs that are connected to human senses—smell, taste, feel, and look. Anytime you can include **human sense** details in your sentences do so because the addition enables you to connect with the reader more directly. For example, a linking verb like **felt** invites you to finish the thought:

He felt ...

- ill.
- happy.
- like going to a movie.
- as if he had been ripped off.

HELPING OR AUXILIARY VERBS help describe the main verb. There are nine helping verbs that are always helping verbs; they are never the main verb. These helping verbs are:

May	Might	Must
Could	Would	Should
Can	Will	Shall

Study the following sentences. The helping verb is bolded and the main verb is underlined.

- You **should** not cook with metal pans in a microwave oven.
- The cell phone **could** easily fit in the oversized purse.
- We **will** need help harvesting from the neighbors.
- The student **must** visit the library to check out the book.

Together, the helping verb and the main verb are called the complete verb.

There are three verbs, **be**, **do**, and **have**, that can be either main verbs or helping verbs depending upon their usage. The forms of these three verbs that can be either main or helping verbs are:

Be	Is	Are	Was	Were	Be	Being	Been
Do	Do	Does	Did				
Have	Has	Have	Had				

Again, study the sentences below. In the first three, a form of **be**, **do**, and **have** is used as a main verb. In the second three sentences, the same form of **be**, **do**, and **have** is used as a helping verb.

- She **was** a fearsome giant, Jörd from Norse mythology.
- He **does** the dishes immediately after dinner.
- They **have** a llama for a pet.
- The child **was** fed by his sister.
- She **does** call whenever necessary.
- They **have** danced in the Awa Odori, the largest dance festival in Japan.

With helping verbs, you can create a more precise verb because you are able to further clarify and control the verb's meaning. You will use helping verbs to write the perfect, progressive, and perfect progressive verb tenses (see next section). You also use helping verbs to express subtle shifts of meaning in a sentence. For example,

- Sarnia **can** go skating tomorrow.
- Sarnia **must** go skating tomorrow.
- Sarnia **could** go skating tomorrow.
- Sarnia **will** go skating tomorrow.

Verbs are usually either regular or irregular. The best place to start with understanding the differences between regular and irregular verbs is by looking at the past and past participial forms of verbs and how those forms are made.

- For **regular verbs**, the past and past participle forms are made by adding **-ed** to the present tense form. This rule applies to all regular verbs:

Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
work	worked	worked	working
borrow	borrowed	borrowed	borrowing
grin	grinned	grinned	grinning
plant	planted	planted	planting
rush	rushed	rushed	rushing

- For **irregular verbs**, the past and past participle forms do not follow the rules for regular verbs. The past participial forms of irregular verbs may end in **-ed, -en, -e, -n, -t, -k, -g, and -d**.

Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
dive	dove	dived	diving
break	broke	broken	breaking
come	came	come	coming
see	saw	seen	seeing
put	put	put	putting
stick	stuck	stuck	sticking
dig	dug	dug	digging
lead	led	led	leading

The best way to learn the various principle parts of any verb is slowly through memorization.

A number of websites exist that offer extensive lists of irregular verbs, including the following:

- UsingEnglish.com -- <http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/irregular-verbs/>
- EnglishPage.com -- <http://www.englishpage.com/irregularverbs/irregularverbs.html>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab -- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/605/01/>
- MyEnglishTeacher.net -- http://www.myenglishteacher.net/irregular_verbs.html

TENSE, AGREEMENT, VOICE

Verbs designate tense, the time when an action or state of being/condition takes place. All verbs have the characteristic of tense or the time when an action or state of being occurs.

Tense is one of the functions of a verb. Everything that happens (actions or conditions or states), happens in: present, past, or future time. A verb indicates the time of an action, a condition, or a state by changing its form. So, when you write and want to show when something occurs, the place to start is with the verb form you use.

English has twelve active verb forms.

PRESENT		PAST	FUTURE
Simple Tense			
Use	An action or event that occurs regularly or repeatedly.	An action that ended at a specific point in the past.	An action that will occur after now.
Formation	Base form of the verb / base form + s	Add -ed	Will + base form of the verb
Example	<i>laugh/laughs</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>will laugh</i>
Progressive Tense			
Use	An action that is happening now.	An action was happening (past progressive) when another action happened (simple past).	An action that will be happening over time, in the future, when something else happens.
Formation	Form of be + present participle	Was or were + present participle	Will + be + present participle
Example	<i>am / is / are laughing</i>	<i>was / were laughing</i>	<i>will be laughing</i>
Perfect Tense			
Use	An action that happened at an unspecified time in the past.	An action that ended before another action or time in the past.	An action that will end before another action or time in the future.
Formation	have or has + past participle	Had + past participle	Will + have + past participle
Example	<i>has / have laughed</i>	<i>had laughed</i>	<i>will have laughed</i>

Perfect Progressive Tense			
Use	An action occurring over time that started in the past and continues into the present.	An action that happened over time, in the past, before another time or action in the past.	An action occurring over time, in the future, before another action or time in the future.
Formation	have + been + present participle	Had + been + present participle	Will + have + been + present participle
Example	<i>has / have been laughing</i>	<i>had been laughing</i>	<i>will have been laughing</i>

Verbs have to agree with their subjects in number.

In English grammar, **number** indicates a word is singular or plural. In English sentences, subjects and verbs must agree in number. Such agreement is typically called **subject-verb** agreement. So if the subject is singular, the verb must be singular or if the subject is plural, the verb must be plural.

Consider these sentences:

- A. The boy eats his lunch.
- B. The boys eat their lunch.

- A. The dog barks at strangers.
- B. The dogs bark at strangers.

- A. The writer enjoys learning new words.
- B. The writers enjoy learning new words.

In each pair of sentences the subjects and verbs agree in number.

PRESENT TENSE VERB FORMS

All the "A" sentences have singular subjects and singular verbs, and all the "B" sentences have plural subjects and plural verbs.

Singular Subject and Verb	Plural Subject and Verb
A. The boy eats his lunch.	B. The boys eat their lunch.
A. The dog barks at strangers.	B. The dogs bark at strangers.
A. The writer enjoys learning new words.	B. The writers enjoy learning new words.

Pay attention to the information in the following table because you need to think about how subjects and third person, present tense verbs become plural.

Singular Forms for Nouns and Present Tense 3rd Person Verbs	Plural Forms for Nouns and Present Tense 3rd Person Verbs
Singular nouns have no –s.	Many nouns become plural by adding
Singular present tense verbs require the –s. The boy eats. The girl plays. The baby swims.	Plural present tense verbs are pluralized by removing the –s. The boys eat. The girls play. The babies swim.

The approach to the singular and plural forms for verbs seems to go against the rules regarding how words are made plural. Just be aware that the only time this odd occurrence happens is with **singular and plural 3rd person present tense verbs**. **Singular 3rd person present tense verbs require an –s. Plural 3rd person present tense verbs DO NOT use –s.**

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

In English grammar, voice shows whether the subject of a sentence is performing the action of the verb or receiving the action of the verb.

ACTIVE VOICE

You create active voice by making sure the subject of your sentence performs the action of the verb. Look at the sentence below.

The tiny kitten ate half a can of cat food.

In this sentence, the subject, **kitten**, performs the action, **ate**.

Look at this next sentence.

The student took the book from the shelf.

In the above sentence, the subject, **student**, performs the action, **took**.

PASSIVE VOICE

In passive voice, rather than the subject performing the action of the verb, the subject receives the action of the verb.

The half can of food was eaten by the tiny kitten.

The book was taken from the shelf by the student.

In both of the above sentences, the subjects, **can** and **book**, are not performing the action of the verbs, **was eaten** and **was taken**. As you can see, the “half can of food” does not perform the action described by the verb.

Instead, the action, **was eaten**, is shifted to the end of the sentence to the noun, **kitten**, just in the same way the **student** is now the recipient of the action **was taken**.

In writing, you always want to make active voice your first choice. To recognize active and passive voice sentences, do the following:

1. Find the subject of the sentence
2. Find the main verb of the sentence
3. Examine the relationship between the subject and the main verb:
 - Does the subject perform the action of the main verb? If so, the sentence is in **active** voice.
 - Does the subject sit there while something else—named or unnamed—performs an action on it? If so, the sentence is in **passive** voice.

To change passive voice to active voice follow these three steps:

1. Delete the form of the **to be** verb.
2. Use an active verb form rather than the past participial verb form.
3. Make the object of the preposition and any words associated with the object of the preposition (but do **not** include the preposition) the subject of the sentence.

Read the sentences below.

A letter was written to his brother by Jamal. (Passive voice)

1. Delete the verb was.
2. Change written to wrote.
3. Change Jamal from being the object of the preposition to become the subject of the sentence.

Jamal wrote a letter to his brother. (Active voice)

As you work on writing, make sure you always know what voice you are using. You want to use an active voice as much as possible in your writing to make your writing is more vigorous and energetic, but sometimes you will need to use passive voice.

Two instances in which you might typically use passive voice occur when, first, you do not know who performed the action of the verb.

The gifts were left on the door step last night.

Second, passive voice is acceptable to use when the actor is less important than the object receiving the action

A cure for AIDS was discovered by the team of scientists.

Terminal Punctuation

In English, terminal punctuation, also called **stops** and **end marks**, consists of the **period**, the **exclamation mark**, and the **question mark**. These three punctuation marks typically bring sentences to a logical close.

THE PERIOD is used to end (1) declarative sentences, which state facts and opinions; (2) imperative sentences, which give commands and directions; (3) indirect questions; and (4) polite requests that are stated as questions.

Declarative sentences stating facts:

- Brasília, Brazil, was founded 21 April 1960.
- Computers are now used worldwide.

Declarative sentences stating opinions:

- The Empire State Building is the most beautiful Art Deco building in New York City.
- Practicing Tai Chi is the best way to remain healthy.

Imperative sentences:

- Don't forget your rain slicker.
- Turn left at the next corner.

Indirect questions:

- The tour guide asked if everyone was comfortable.
- He asked the woman if she knew the road to Salamanca, Spain.

Requests that are stated as questions:

- Would you please point out Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on the map.
- Could you translate that sign over there for me, please.

THE EXCLAMATION MARK (or exclamation point) follows an exclamatory statement or an interjection and is typically used to express strong emotion.

- That was the worst play I've ever seen!
- You should be more careful with yourself!
- He can't carry that by himself. Help him!

THE QUESTION MARK is used at the end of direct questions.

- Are we visiting Ayers Rock tomorrow?
- Where do you want me to set my shoes?
- Am I allowed to spin the prayer wheel?

Clauses, Phrases & Sentence Types

In this unit, you will study clauses and phrases. Even though they are distinctly different, both clauses and phrases will improve your sentences by adding detail or further information. Also in this unit, you will learn about the four sentence types, which will empower you to write more confident sentences and think about your writing style.

At a minimum, a clause contains a subject and verb, whereas a phrase can be even only one word. What you need to think about and learn is how each functions in your sentences. Knowing the distinction between the two will help you to decide how to use these powerful tools for building sentences.

In short, here is the difference between clauses and phrases:

Clause	A group of related words containing a subject and verb.
Phrase	A word or group of related words lacking a subject and verb.

In this section, you will be adding to your basic sentences with clauses and phrases; combining ideas and creating complexity; learning about the four sentence types; and creating your writing style.

A. **Clauses**

1. Independent Clauses
2. Dependent Clauses
 - a. Adjective Subordinate Clauses
 - i. Restrictive and Nonrestrictive adjective subordinate clauses
 - b. Adverb Subordinate Clauses
 - c. Placement and Punctuation of Dependent Clauses

B. **Noun Phrases**

1. Prepositional
2. Absolute
3. Appositive

C. **Verb Phrases**

1. Infinitive Phrases
2. Participial Phrases
 - a. Present
 - b. Past

D. **Sentence Types**

1. Simple
2. Compound
3. Complex
4. Compound-Complex

Clauses

Again, a clause is a group of related words that contains a subject and verb.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSES are clauses that stand on their own. Here is an independent clause:

- **The tutor discussed the paper with the student.**

Some clauses, however, even though they still contain a subject and verb, cannot stand on their own. These are **Dependent Clauses**. Let's add a dependent clause to the previous sentence:

- **The tutor *who was in the writing center* discussed the paper with the student.**

In the dependent clause, *who* functions as the subject (because it is a pronoun), *was* is the verb, and *in the writing center* is a prepositional phrase. The dependent clause modifies *tutor*, clarifying which tutor discussed the paper. Knowing the difference between dependent and independent clauses will be of crucial importance when you learn about the four sentence types.

Look at some examples of clauses:

- Once I find the axe . . . (dependent)
- The bunny found shelter under the tree. (independent)
- Although you lost the keys . . . (dependent)
- I cannot believe you were right! (independent)

Subordinating Conjunctions will signal dependent clauses. You learned about subordinating conjunctions in Unit 2, so take a look at the list again:

Cause or Effect	Concession	Condition	Comparison or Contrast	Purpose	Space or Time
as because since	though although even though even if	if since unless when whenever	while as rather than	in order that so that	before since once after while when until

DEPENDENT CLAUSES

There are two types of **Dependent Clauses**, or **Subordinate Clauses**, that are important for you to know at this stage of your development as a writer, **Adjective Subordinate Clauses** and **Adverb Subordinate Clauses**.

ADJECTIVE SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Adjective Subordinate Clauses, as the “adjective” in the name suggests, modify a noun in a sentence. Most adjective subordinate clauses will usually begin with a relative pronoun: **who**, **whom**, **that**, **which**, **whose**, **when**, and **where**. You can already see that an adjective clause will give a certain type of information about a person, thing, concept, event, or place by looking over these words.

Here are some examples using each of the words in the list:

- Lydia, **who** was an expert climber, needed less coaching than Ava.
- The dog, to **whom** the treat was given, ran around in circles.
- The cars **that** were directed to an alternative entrance passed by the old cotton candy stand.
- Johnny found Monday, **which** was his birthday, quite exciting and full of surprises.
- The officer located the student **whose** backpack was stolen crying in the lobby.
- Do you remember the day **when** you lost your phone?
- I can still remember the place **where** I thought I left it.

In some of these cases, you may actually choose to omit the relative pronoun for stylistic reasons. Instead of “Do you remember the day when you lost your phone?”, you can simply write, “Do you remember the day you lost your phone?” In either case, you are modifying the noun “day,” but the adjective clause is not as obvious when you leave out the relative pronoun “when.”

You may notice in the examples above that sometimes you use a comma to separate the adjective subordinate clause from the sentence. When you use an adjective subordinate clause, you will need to decide whether it is a **restrictive** or **nonrestrictive** adjective subordinate clause. In many cases, you will find that **which** will signal a nonrestrictive clause (comma required) and **that** will signal a restrictive clause (no comma needed). However, this is not always the case. If you get used to thinking through the difference, you will know when to use a comma and when not to.

You need to decide whether or not the description is essential to distinguishing the noun from other nouns or not. Look at some examples:

- **Suzanne chose to dance with the guy who was wearing a blue bandana.**

- ("who was wearing a blue bandana" is restrictive because the writer needs to distinguish the guy from the other people at the dance.)
- **Suzanne chose to dance with the guy wearing a blue bandana, which was faded.**
 - ("which was faded" is nonrestrictive because the writer is merely adding information about the bandana.)

Noting the distinction between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses is less important while you are drafting, but it is quite important when deciding whether or not to separate the clause from the main sentence with a comma during the editing stage of the writing process (you will learn about the writing process in the next unit).

To review, remember:

- A **Restrictive Clause (no comma)** narrows down all of the possibilities of the noun into one specific reference.
- A **Nonrestrictive Clause (use a comma)** does not restrict, or limit, the noun to a particular specific reference.

ADVERB SUBORDINATE CLAUSES:

In order to add concrete detail and to construct more elaborate sentences, you will need to learn about and use adverbial subordinate clauses. Adverb subordinate clauses, as the name suggests, will modify a verb by describing how, when, why, where, or under what condition something is happening or someone is doing an action. Note that these clauses, like adjective subordinate clauses, will not stand on their own. Rather, they will be added to a sentence to provide additional description and information. However, adverb subordinate conjunctions are easy to spot and use. The most noticeable characteristic of adverb subordinate clauses is that they will begin with one of the subordinate conjunctions that you learned about in Unit 2. Here is the list again:

Cause or Effect	Concession	Condition	Comparison or Contrast	Purpose	Space or Time
as because since	though although even though even if	if since unless when whenever	while as rather than	in order that so that	before since once after while when until

Although adverb subordinate clauses contain at least one subject and one verb, they begin with words that make them **dependent**. In other words, these clauses have to be attached to independent clauses that provide additional information in order for them to make sense.

Let's look at some examples:

- **Because** it might rain, I will bring an umbrella to the festival.
- **Although** your mother doesn't like him, she must admit that he plays the piano beautifully.
- **Whenever** we leave the beach at dinner time, we get pizza at the brewery.
- **Rather than** taking the freeway home, why don't we drive the old highway 395?
- **So that** you don't have to pay a fine, you better not park in front of that fire hydrant.
- **After** she finished the interview, Emma felt relieved.

For each of the above, notice how we have answered a potential question the reader might ask. Adverb clauses will describe the verb and add detail to your sentences. In the first example above, the adverb clause clarifies why Fiona is "bringing" the umbrella. Also, when you learn about the four sentence types, you will discover that adverb clauses create a unique type of sentence.

You should consider keeping a list of these subordinating conjunctions as you write so that you can begin to work these into your sentences. As you use them, they will become a natural part of your writing style.

PLACEMENT AND PUNCTUATION OF ADVERB SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

Adverb Subordinate Clauses require a comma if they are placed before the main clause. You are free to place an adverb subordinate clause before or after the main clause. Here are some examples:

- **Because it might rain**, I will bring an umbrella to the festival. (comma)
- I will bring an umbrella to the festival **because it might rain**. (no comma)
- **Whenever we leave the beach at dinner time**, we get pizza at the brewery.
- We get pizza at the brewery **whenever we leave the beach at dinner time**.
- **Rather than taking the freeway home**, why don't we drive the old highway 395?
- Why don't we drive the old highway 395 **rather than taking the freeway home**?
- **So that you don't have to pay a fine**, you better not park in front of that hydrant!
- You better not park in front of that hydrant **so that you don't have to pay a fine**!
- **After she finished the interview**, Emma felt relieved.
- Emma felt relieved **after she finished the interview**.

In each of the examples, notice how the adverb subordinate clauses can go either before or after the main sentence. The rule is simply to place a comma after the clause if it precedes the main sentence, but generally to omit the comma if it appears after the main sentence.

Which of the versions of sentences above do you prefer? Which placement (before or after) gets your attention and produces a strong sentence? Your answers to these questions will help you to begin to think about your writing style.

For greater emphasis, many writers will place adverb subordinate clauses at the beginning of their sentences rather than after. This is also true of many arguments when writers qualify their position before stating their main argument.

To review, there are two rules to remember when punctuating adverb subordinate clauses:

1. If the clause is at the beginning of the sentence, use a comma after the clause.
2. If the clause is at the end of the sentence, you will generally not use a comma.

There is, however, an exception to rule #2:

If the clause comes at the end of the sentence and is contrasting or contradictory, then you insert a comma. For example:

- **He cleaned the kitchen, whereas his roommate sat on the couch eating pizza.**

In this case, you use a comma because the clause comes at the end of the sentence and is also a contradictory idea.

Phrases

Phrases are a single group of words (typically two or more words). There are two main types of phrases to know as you move forward in your growth as a writer, **Noun Phrases** and **Verb Phrases**. Noun phrases contain a noun, and verb phrases will typically begin with a verb.

Noun Phrases

Noun phrases may be easier for you to begin using and are the most common phrase you will encounter and use (even in other languages!). In fact, you've already read about and worked with some noun phrases, prepositional phrases, so let's start there.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES:

Prepositional phrases contain a preposition and a noun. **"In the writing center"** is an example of a prepositional phrase.

Take the sentence we looked at above:

- The tutor, *who was in the writing center*, discussed the paper with the student.

We can change the clause, *who was in the writing center*, into a phrase by removing the modifier "who" and, most importantly, the verb "was." We now have the phrase *in the writing center*. Let's place it back in the sentence:

- The tutor, *in the writing center*, discussed the paper with the student.

The crucial difference is that we no longer use a verb (**was**). Therefore, we have a simple prepositional phrase.

Look at a few more examples:

- **From my vantage point**, I can see two eagles.
- **Upon further review**, I think you deserve an "A."
- You'll find the door **down the hall** and **to the left**. (two prepositional phrases)

Prepositional phrases---**made up minimally of a preposition + noun or a pronoun**---are the hardest working modifiers in the English language. They can act like nouns, like adjectives, and like adverbs. Because they are so robust, they can modify nouns or verbs in sentences. Prepositional phrases can add description and detail to your writing.

Here is a list of the most commonly used prepositions in English:

aboard about above according to across after against along amid among around as at atop because of before behind below beneath beside	besides between beyond but (meaning except) by concerning considering despite down during except excepting excluding following for from in inside in spite of instead of	into like minus near of off on on account of onto opposite out out of outside over past per plus round save	since than through throughout to toward towards under underneath unlike until up upon versus via with within without
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ABSOLUTE PHRASES:

Absolute phrases are an important type of noun phrase to know when writing because absolute phrases modify an entire clause. Many phrases modify a specific word, but absolute phrases describe the whole clause that follows or comes before it. This is helpful to you because you may like a sentence that you have written, but you want to add more detail. You can place an absolute phrase before or after the sentence as it's written.

Here are some examples:

- **Diamonds sparkling in the sunlight**, the ring made its way up the wedding aisle.
- She fought off the zombies one by one, **hands grabbing and punching each of them as they advanced**.
- **His feet rooted to the spot**, the hunter listened for sounds of movement in the forest.

Absolute phrases are sometimes easily added to your sentences because you need not change the root sentence that you have written. Let's say you started with the following sentence:

- The clerk monitored the customers.

We can easily add to the sentence using the parts of speech that you learned earlier.

- The **busy** clerk monitored the customers **in the self-checkout area at the hardware store**.

With an absolute phrase, we can add even more to this simple sentence.

- **His eyes watching every scanner**, the busy clerk monitored the customers in the self-checkout area at the hardware store.

The absolute phrase describes the whole sentence and provides detail about how the clerk monitors the customers. Absolute phrases are especially helpful when writing about something you have observed closely. As you may have already noticed, absolute phrases are considered a type of noun phrase because they contain at least a noun and a participle. A participle, as you learned in Unit 3, is the **-ing** (present participle) or **-ed** (past participle) form of a verb. In most cases, you will also easily be able to add modifiers and/or objects to your Absolute Phrases.

- **Diamonds** (noun) **sparkling** (verb - present participle) **in the sunlight** (modifier, in this case a prepositional phrase)

- **hands** (noun) **grabbing and punching** (verbs – present participle) **each** (object) **of them as they advanced**(modifiers)
- **Feet** (noun) **rooted** (verb – past participle) **to the spot** (modifier)
- **His eyes** (noun) **watching**(verb – Present participle) **every scanner** (object)

Absolute phrases will be one of the most helpful phrases as you develop as a writer because they are so easy to add to well-crafted sentences.

APPOSITIVE PHRASES:

Appositive Phrases add detail and modify a noun. Apposition means to place two things next to each other for explanation. With Appositive Phrases, you add layers of meaning to a sentence.

An appositive may be one word that modifies another noun (“My cousin **Dan** lives next door.”).

Like Absolute Phrases, you may add these to a sentence that you’ve already written. Appositive phrases can be added to the beginning or end of a sentence like Absolute Phrases, but they can also be added within sentences as well. Instead of containing a noun and a verb/participle, Appositive Phrases will consist of nouns and modifiers.

Here are some examples:

- His car, **a rusty 1982 Ford Mustang**, chugged down the road like an old mule.
- **A usually calm and mild-mannered employee**, Anthony erupted with a volley of barely intelligible words.
- The critic praised the lead actor, **a teenager from India**.

When using appositive phrases in the middle of a sentence note that you must use two commas, one before the phrase and one at the end, to separate it from the main sentence. We can add verbs to appositive phrases, as in the following example:

- The critic praised the lead actor, **a teenager from India who began working at the theater and became an understudy with no formal training**.

You must always place an appositive as close to the noun it is modifying as possible. Otherwise, you may end up modifying a noun you did not intend.

Verb Phrases

Two types of verb phrases that you have already written will help you to add detail to sentences: Infinitive Phrases and Participial Phrases. Because each of them begins with a certain type of verb, you will refer to them as verb phrases.

INFINITIVE PHRASES

Infinitive phrases begin with the infinitive form of a verb, to+verb:

- to swim
- to laugh
- to feel

We can make phrases from these infinitives by adding detail:

- to swim the length of the pool under water
- to laugh more often
- to feel valued and respected

We can then add these to sentences:

- **To swim the length of the pool under water**, he had to hold his breath for two full minutes.
- **To laugh more often**, the couple decided to watch more comedies.
- **To feel valued and respected**, students should share their talents and life experiences.

These same Infinitive Phrases can also go in a different position in the sentence to create a different emphasis. As with adverb subordinate clauses, if an infinitive phrase is placed at the end of the sentence, you do not use a comma:

- He had to hold his breath for two full minutes **to swim the length of the pool under water**.
- The couple decided to watch more comedies **to laugh more often**.
- Students should share their talents and life experiences **to feel valued and respected**.

Infinitive Phrases will always contain and begin with to+verb and express a goal. You will find these helpful when you are writing about what you desire to have happen or are making a plea for something that needs to happen.

PARTICIPIAL PHRASES

Participial Phrases use the participial form of the verb. There are two types:

1. **Present:** -ing verbs, as in “having a good time”
2. **Past:** -ed verbs, as in “knocked out by a blow to the head”

Participial phrases will add action and excitement to your sentences. Look at a few examples:

- **Overpowered by the strong urge to vomit**, the boy ran outside.
- **Running out of time**, she wrote the first word that came to mind.
- **Driving at nearly 120 miles per hour**, the car swerved and narrowly missed a deer.
- **Exhausted by the long day of rowing**, he fell asleep immediately.

Notice how these sentences are more descriptive and appealing with participial phrases. As you learned in Unit 3, both participles and infinitives can be subjects of sentences. As verb phrases, though, you can use them to expand and add sophistication to your sentences.

Knowing infinitive and participial phrases can be helpful to you as you improve your writing. Remember, though, that when applying phrases to your writing, phrases, as opposed to clauses, will not stand on their own as a complete idea. Therefore, you will be using phrases to modify and add detail to your sentences.

Sentence Types

When you start to put together all the clauses and phrases you are learning, your sentences will become much different, and you will begin to create your own writing style. You will find that your way of constructing sentences will be different from other students, and this is part of the craft of writing. In fact, that is one of the reasons that writing is so interesting. An infinite number of ways exists to state your ideas.

Thankfully, though, there are NOT an infinite number of sentence types. There are only four, and they are categorized according to what type and how many independent and dependent clauses you will find in each.

SIMPLE SENTENCES

Simple Sentences contain only one independent clause. These will be basic, but complete, sentences like these:

- The roses grew quickly in the wet, fertile soil.
- The balloons floated away.

Notice that each of these sentences contain some concrete detail, yet they do not have any dependent clauses. Simple sentences can have phrases in them, though. These are still simple sentences even though we have added phrases to them:

- The roses, red and glistening, grew quickly in the wet, fertile soil.
- Spinning wildly, the balloons floated away.

Many beginning writers are told that their writing style is “choppy.” This simply means that a writer is relying too heavily on simple sentences. To fix this and improve writing style, you need to learn how to write using a variety of sentence types. The three remaining sentence types are Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex.

COMPOUND SENTENCES

When you join two (or more) independent clauses, you will create a compound sentence. The most common way to construct a compound sentence is by using coordinating conjunctions ([FANBOYS](#)). Coordinating conjunctions indicate the logical relationship between sentences, so use them to your advantage. You may want to refer to this list while you are writing and composing compound sentences:

Coordinating Conjunction		Relationship
F	for	reason
A	and	addition
N	nor	not another option
B	but	contrast
O	or	another option
Y	yet	contrasting addition
S	so	result

Here are some examples:

- We are looking for sticks, **for** these are the best materials to use.
- The girls are building a trap, **and** they hope to catch a lizard.
- They have not found any insects, **nor** have they seen any lizards today.
- Lizards are fast, **but** the girls are determined to catch one.
- We could go to the beach, **or** we could go up to the mountains.
- I have been meaning to tell you, **yet** I just have not had a chance.
- The chocolate was left in the sun, **so** you should probably not eat it right now.

Compound sentences are usually the first type of sentences that writers will begin using after simple sentences because the construction and punctuation of compound sentences are relatively simple. In addition, the list of coordinating conjunctions is so short that students easily remember the **FANBOYS**.

You can also use the semicolon (;) to form a compound sentence. You will use a semicolon to create a compound sentence when two sentences are closely related. Look at this example:

- The old car sputtered to the top of the hill; we were all relieved.

In this case, all you need is a semicolon. *Note that the first letter of the first word in the second clause is not capitalized.*

A more common way to use a semicolon when creating a compound sentence is to use an adverbial conjunction. Below is the list of adverbial conjunctions you learned in Unit 2:

Addition	Emphasis	Comparison or Contrast	Cause or Effect	Time
in addition furthermore moreover further	in fact indeed	however nevertheless nonetheless otherwise in contrast in comparison	as a result consequently hence therefore thus	finally meanwhile next

Compound sentences that use a semicolon and adverbial conjunction will commonly look like the sentences below:

- The old car sputtered to the top of the hill; **therefore**, we were all relieved.
- The construction was proceeding as planned; **however**, the looming storm threatened to delay the project.

Ultimately, it is your choice whether or not to use a semicolon or a period when you join sentences with an adverbial conjunction. Just remember that if you use a semicolon, you have created a compound sentence.

COMPLEX SENTENCES

When you compose a sentence by joining at least one dependent clause and an independent clause, you create a complex sentence. Learning to write complex sentences is the best way to improve your writing style. **Subordination**, deciding which clause is less important, is perhaps the most important step you will make at this stage of your development as a writer. When you decide which clause will begin with a subordinating conjunction, you have chosen the clause that you feel is less important. Look at this list:

Cause or Effect	Concession	Condition	Comparison or Contrast	Purpose	Space and Time
as because since	though although even though even if	if since unless when whenever	While As rather than	in order that so that	Before Since Once After While When Until

Most of the time, you will use a subordinating conjunction from this list to create a subordinate clause that precedes the main, independent clause.

Look at these sentences:

- Although your ribs are sore from laughing too much, you really need to compete this weekend.
- Because the stinger is lodged under your skin, you will experience pain for about an hour.
- Since the corpse was found in a shallow pond, the forensic anthropologist will lead the investigation.

Notice how each of these begins with a dependent clause that adds information to the main clause. The main clause is complete, but the writer has added clarifying detail in the dependent clause. Remember that the dependent clause can also appear at the end of a sentence. In that case, you generally would not use a comma between the main clause and the subordinate clause.

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES

The final sentence type is the compound-complex sentence. A compound-complex sentence consists of more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. In many cases, you are simply adding a dependent clause to the beginning or end of a compound sentence, or you are adding another independent clause to a complex sentence.

Look at how the compound sentences you already studied can become compound-complex:

- **Compound:** We could go to the beach, or we could go up to the mountains.
- **Compound-Complex:** We could go to the beach, or we could go up to the mountains since it might rain on the coast.
- **Compound:** I have been meaning to tell you, yet I just have not had a chance.
- **Compound-Complex:** Even though you might not believe it, I have been meaning to tell you, yet I just have not had a chance.

Likewise, you may simply add another independent clause to a complex sentence as in these examples:

- **Complex:** Although your ribs are sore from laughing too much, you really need to compete this weekend.
- **Compound-Complex:** Although your ribs are sore from laughing too much, you really need to compete this weekend, but you can still have fun.
- **Complex:** Because the stinger is lodged under your skin, you will experience pain for about an hour.
- **Compound-Complex:** Because the stinger is lodged under your skin, you will experience pain for about an hour, yet the pain will subside gradually.

In all of these examples, you are simply adding more detail and specific information to the sentences. Also, you will notice that as the sentences become richer, the possibilities for original combinations increase.

Many writers will begin to use the compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence types and never look back. This is a wonderful step, but at times, a simple sentence is just what a piece of writing needs to communicate a point to the readers. Therefore, never underestimate a well-placed simple sentence for emphasis, and simple sentences can easily be enriched by utilizing the noun or verb phrases you learned earlier in this unit.

Since you now know about clauses, phrases, and four sentence types, you have completed your toolbox. The eight parts of speech form the building blocks; subjects and verbs are the principles of sentence building; and clauses and phrases put the principles into action. The four sentence types are the basic blueprint that you will follow as you begin to construct confident, detailed, varied sentences.

Creating Your Writing Style

As you become more comfortable and begin writing more often, you will find yourself using some types of sentences more than others. You will notice patterns in your writing that will differ from others' writing patterns. You will use certain adverbial conjunctions more often, and you will gravitate toward certain types of clauses, phrases, and sentence types more than the other ones. This is part of your writing style.

There are many other factors, however, of your writing style besides clauses, phrases, and sentence types. You will remember in Unit 3, that you learned about writing in the active voice and maintaining the same tense. This is also part of your writing style.

Many of the choices you make in terms of what types of words to include, how formal you want the written project to be, and how you use creative aspects of language like analogies and metaphors will also contribute to your own individual writing style. Many writers wisely choose to avoid using clichés as they detract from the individual nature of writing.

Ultimately, as you reflect on who you are and what you value, you will begin to craft a style of writing that is comfortable and authentic to you. This is important because you want your writing to reflect who you are and be an extension of your individual voice. You are a unique individual, so work to have your writing reflect your personality, individuality, and values.

Be yourself

Composing and Editing

In this unit, you will learn to write paragraphs. Following the five steps of the writing process, you will discover that writing a detailed, interesting, and effective paragraph becomes a practical, thoughtful activity.

Many people consider writing to be a difficult activity, fraught with anxiety and stress. However, when you consider that writing is a process with logical and helpful steps leading you toward a tangible goal, it becomes manageable and eventually enjoyable.

During this unit, you might reflect on your own history and future as a writer.

- Who has inspired you in your journey as a writer?
- Who are your writing heroes?
- Who have been your most meaningful teachers?
- What are your plans to continue growing as a writer?
- What are your short term and long term goals with your writing?

In this section you will use everything you have learned so far, and learn more about:

- A. **Paragraphs**
 - 1. The Topic Sentence
 - 2. Supporting Details
 - 3. The Concluding Sentence
 - 4. The Writing Process
 - B. **Inventing**
 - 1. Methods
 - a. Freewriting
 - b. Brainstorming
 - c. Journalistic Questions
 - d. Listing
 - e. Clustering
 - 2. Considering Audience and Purpose
 - C. **Organizing**
 - 1. Patterns
 - a. Compare/Contrast
 - b. Cause and Effect
 - c. Division and Classification
 - d. Process Analysis
 - e. Illustration
 - D. **Drafting**
 - E. **Revising**
 - 1. Macro-revision
 - a. Q.U.E.S.T.
 - 2. Micro-revision
 - a. Clarity
 - b. Variety
 - c. Effectiveness
 - d. Transitions
 - F. **Editing**
 - 1. Sentence Errors
 - a. Subject-Verb Agreement
 - b. Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement
 - c. Parallel Structure
 - G. **Punctuation**
 - 1. Commas
 - a. Commas with Introductory Elements
 - b. Commas in a Series
 - c. Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions
 - d. Commas Splices (and Fused Sentences)
 - e. Subordination
 - 2. Apostrophes
 - 3. Semicolons
 - H. **Capitalization**
 - I. **Spelling**
 - a. Spelling Rules
- Commonly Confused Words - Homophones**

Writing Paragraphs

As your final assignment for this course, you will be writing a paragraph. A basic paragraph contains three parts: (1) Topic Sentence, (2) Supporting Details, (3) Concluding Sentence.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE

A **topic sentence** is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. You use the topic sentence to tell the reader what the paragraph is about. Each topic sentence has two elements: Topic and Purpose.

To write an effective topic sentence, you need to know your **topic**, the subject of your paragraph. When choosing a topic for a paragraph, you need to choose one that is narrow but still allows for development. For example, you might want to use the topic “student fear” or “teens and their cell phones.” Each of these provides a simple topic you can develop.

In addition to the subject, every topic sentence also needs a **purpose** to explain what the paragraph will say about the topic. For example, you might write, “**Students’ fears hurt their education.**” In this example, the paragraph will show how fear hurts educational goals. On the other hand, you might choose the other topic and propose that “**Teens are addicted to their cell phones.**” In this example, the paragraph will show addictive behavior. Notice how each of these topic sentences clearly states the topic and purpose of the paragraph.

Now look at some examples of common topic sentence mistakes:

- **War is bad.**
This is too broad a topic for one paragraph. People write books about wars.
- **I ate bananas yesterday.**
This is a nice statement, but it is too narrow. Once you tell the reader how many bananas, there is really nothing else to say.
- **This paragraph will be about student fears.**
This is an announcement. The reader has no idea what you want to say about fears, what your purpose is.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

The supporting details in your paragraph will form the basis of most of your sentences. For every detail you include, you will also provide explanation and analysis to link the detail to the idea of your topic sentence.

The best details are vivid, specific, and drawn from your own observation and experience. Many times, these will be “sense” details, what you see, feel, taste, smell, and hear. Your supporting details will come by thinking carefully through the assignment or task. You need to be sure that the details you choose are specific and clear.

Let’s take one of the sentences from above and list some supporting details that we might include in the paragraph.

Topic sentence: **Students’ fears hurt their education.**

Supporting details might include some of the following:

- Test anxiety
 - Inability to learn
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Mathematics
- Social fears at school
 - Self-consciousness
 - Bullying
 - Public speaking
 - Sports
- Inability to set goals
 - Short term goals
 - Personal
 - Academic
 - Long term goals
 - Career
 - Life
- Fear of teachers

A writer can choose from this list when developing a paragraph about how student fears inhibit educational achievement. The best choices for supporting details will come from events or experiences the writer has observed firsthand, and the writer can develop supporting details based on information from the writer’s experience and knowledge.

Generally, a well-developed paragraph will include more than three supporting details/examples. However, each topic will dictate a different set of parameters that you will work through as a writer. Sometimes, one extended example can support the topic sentence, but other times, the topic will require several examples.

THE CONCLUDING SENTENCE

Every paragraph that stands on its own will have a sentence that functions as a conclusion. The concluding sentence will provide a satisfying final thought for your reader. In a short paragraph, you will not need to summarize what you've written, so you should think about why your topic or opinion might be important for the reader to consider or what you would like the reader to remember about the topic. A good concluding sentence will be memorable and also links back to the topic sentence. In this way, you create unity in your paragraph.

Here are a couple of examples of concluding sentences:

- **To ensure that they will be victorious over fear, students should always keep their long-term goals in mind.**
- **In conclusion, people need to balance cell phone usage with face to face communication in order to preserve social skills and relationships.**

Notice how each of these sentences sums up the paragraph and leaves the reader with a final, significant thought. In fact, we can predict the supporting details that might be in the paragraph by merely reading the concluding sentence.

The Writing Process

Now that you know the basic parts of the paragraph, you are ready to learn the process of writing a paragraph. All good writers realize the writing is a process rather than a spontaneous, mysterious, activity. Writing is a craft, and there are steps that are necessary to create a paragraph, a paper, a book, a letter, a screenplay, etc. For most writing projects, you will utilize five distinctly different steps, and they should be considered in this order:

1. Inventing
2. Organizing
3. Drafting
4. Revising
5. Editing

When you learn to follow these steps, you will become empowered and confident when you undertake a writing project.

STEP 1 - INVENTING

When you start any writing project, you should plan to spend a significant amount of time exploring your thoughts on the topic and generating (inventing) ideas. Many students make the mistake of jumping into writing the paper without having clear ideas. If you take the time to thoroughly explore your thoughts and think deeply about the assignment, you will immediately improve your writing.

You need to know that writing and thinking go hand-in-hand, so you will need to be writing to explore what you're thinking and generate ideas. There are many easy and effective ways to do this.

METHODS

- **FREEWRTING:** Freewriting occurs when you just let yourself write what's on your mind without worrying about grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, or repetition. The idea is to just keep writing for about 5 minutes without stopping. You will be amazed about the ideas that can float to the surface.
- **BRAINSTORMING:** Exploring your thoughts in a group can be helpful and invigorating, giving you confidence and more ideas than you might otherwise generate in a short amount of time. Working collaboratively, you present ideas to a group of your classmates, family, or friends and keep a record of all the ideas without censoring or discounting any of them. Similar to freewriting, brainstorming is spoken and conducted as a group rather than individually. Each person in the group then keeps the list and can use it as he or she proceeds to the next step of the writing process.

- **JOURNALISTIC QUESTIONS:** You may have seen old films where a journalist is trying to get the facts for a story. You can use these same journalistic questions to explore your topic. The classic list of questions includes: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? For many writing assignments, exploring the “how” and “why” may yield the most information. Asking questions and exploring and finding answers will help you to generate ideas for your writing.
- **LISTING:** Make a list of everything that comes to mind, and then go back over the list and pick what you feel are the best ideas. Sometimes, you will even find yourself writing another list from one of these ideas.
- **CLUSTERING:** Clustering is a visual framework for exploring and generating ideas. You simply start by drawing a circle around your topic and then grouping ideas around it with lines leading to new ideas. You then draw lines to more ideas, linking them together in a diagram.

Here’s an example of how a student worked on a paragraph assignment in Step 1:

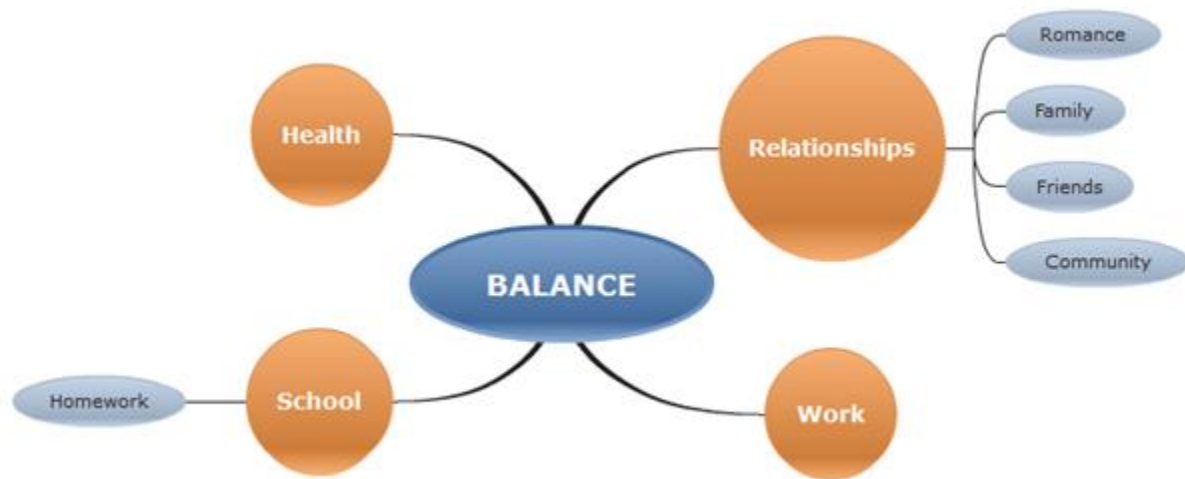
Topic: How should one balance different aspects of his or her life?

Freewrite (*notice a few typos*): Balance means not falling down, maybe juggling things and not dropping them. Choosing what you do, or how to keep things together when you’re busy. I felt like I’m trying to balance work and school and my friends. I wish I had some time to manage. That’s tough. never enough time for the things I want to do just deadlines. my last assignment was in on time but I didn’t do my best. How could I balance my homework and friends and job? What is healthy?

Listing:

- not falling down
- juggling things
- choosing what to do
- work, school, friends
- healthy
 - good diet
 - exercise
 - relationships
 - friends
 - family
 - community
 - romance

Clustering:



CONSIDERING AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE:

As you generate ideas, you will need to consider who will be reading what you will write and what the purpose of the assignment or task is. For instance, if you are writing a letter to a newspaper, the audience and purpose is likely to be much different than when you are writing a letter to your insurance company questioning a charge. Therefore, for each assignment or project, you should spend some time thinking about audience and purpose in order know which ideas you are generating are the best ones for your audience and purpose.

Considering your audience, or, in most cases, your reader, you should consider a series of questions during this first step of the writing process:

- What is it you are trying to achieve with your audience (besides a good grade)?
- Do you want to convince them something is true?
- Do you want to tell them why something is happening or the results?
- Do you want to explain how something works or what something is?
- Do you want to persuade them to take a certain stand?

Ultimately, during step one, inventing, your job is to generate and examine as many ideas as you can in order to choose the best ones for your writing project. You may not use much or any of the writing you generate during step one in your paragraph, but this writing is essential for the process of discovering and developing good ideas.

STEP 2 – ORGANIZING

The next step in the writing process is organizing your ideas into a structure that fits the assignment you have been given. There are many ways to organize your ideas, and you will have to find the method that works best for you. However, most students agree that starting with some type of an outline is the way to go.

There are many different types of outline, and outlines can have many sub-points organized by letters and numbers, or outlines can look like a bulleted list. Either way, your outline should provide you with a map of what your desired piece of writing will look like.

Since you will be writing a paragraph at the end of this unit, your outline should have at least the following points:

- Topic
- Topic sentence
- Supporting Points
 - Specific example
 - Explanation
 - Specific example
 - Explanation
 - Specific Example
 - Explanation
 - Specific Example
 - Explanation
- Concluding Sentence

Some writers will choose to include more detail in their outlines, and other writers will include less detail. Those who include less detail will spend more time in the drafting stage because they are organizing their writing as they go. It becomes necessary, then, to rewrite because now they have a better sense of what they are writing about after a first draft.

If you jump into drafting, you should construct a “reverse” outline, so you can see the structure of your paragraph or essay more clearly. You simply take what you’ve written and fit it into the structure of an outline. Ultimately, as long as you work with each of the five steps of the writing process, even if you invert steps 2 and 3, you will be more successful with your writing projects.

You will need to consider what organizational pattern will best suit the assignment and the details which you have gathered for it. There are many patterns of organization that include:

- **Compare/Contrast:** Explore the similarities and differences between two or more ideas, things, events, etc.
- **Cause and Effect:** Analyze the causes that have led to a particular effect or the effects that have proceeded from a particular cause.
- **Division and Classification:** Divide a topic into types or parts.
- **Process Analysis:** Detail the steps to completing a task, cooking a meal, fixing something, etc.
- **Illustration:** Describe a topic in detail.

These patterns will generate additional information and supporting details. During the next two steps of the writing process, drafting and revising, you will continue to develop and organize your ideas.

STEP 3 - DRAFTING

After you have explored your topic and organized your ideas, you are ready to write a draft of your paragraph. Many writers begin and end their writing process in this one step, and their grades and success suffer as a result. Drafting is an important step, but it need not take the long hours and become the stressful activity that some writers fear. With the preparation of Exploring and Organizing (Steps 1 and 2) writing becomes much less stressful and less time consuming. Once you learn about the benefits of Revising and Editing (Steps 4 and 5), you will be even more comfortable during the drafting step.

For drafting, the most important thing is to get down to business. Seize the moment. Take your outline and write. Don't stop to correct every sentence. Don't stop to change direction. Don't fix spelling. Just write with the outline as a guide.

During the drafting stage, you will begin to shape your writing into what it will eventually look like as a final product. Therefore, if the assignment is a paragraph, you should draft a complete paragraph before you move on to the next step. If the assignment is a multi-paragraph essay, you should complete a draft of all the paragraphs. However, you need to remember that this is only the third step, so it need not be perfect.

Ideally, after you have generated a full draft, you should set it aside for a day or two. Good writers manage their time carefully and allow for ample time in between each step of the writing process. The time in between steps is useful for your brain by giving it time to process information. Some call this "soak" or "stew" time. Even just a few hours in between steps will help you become more successful.

A note about Writer's Block: To help keep you moving through this step, remember that your draft need not be perfect. Revising and Editing (Steps 4 and 5) will take care of mistakes. The more you can free yourself to write without anxiety or overloaded expectations, the better, more thorough draft you will generate, which will help you be more successful when revising and editing.

STEP 4 - REVISING

Once you've written a full draft and let it sit for a day or two, you are ready to revise. The word revision means to change a text and review, but the root of the word is vision, which means to see. Therefore, in this step you will attempt to see your paper from a different or new perspective. Most writers find that there are two types of revision: Macro and Micro.

MACRO-REVISION:

Macro means large, so macro-revision means that you are considering your paragraph as a whole, on a large scale. Some people will refer to this as **global revision**. Many writers find collaboration and sharing helpful during in this step. Getting a different perspective, while it can be scary, is irreplaceable during this stage. You will find that having someone else read your draft, or reading it to someone, will provide you with valuable insights.

There are many different methods for revising, but here are a few key ideas and activities that you should always consider during macro-revision.

You can remember these with the acronym **QUEST**:

- **Q**uestion whether you have enough information and if it matches the assignment.
- **U**nderstand what is working and what isn't. Keep what works and cut what doesn't.
- **E**xplain it to someone else to see if you've missed anything and if it is clear. Many writers find collaboration and sharing helpful during in this step. Getting a different perspective, while it can be scary, is irreplaceable during this stage. You will find that having someone else read your draft, or reading it to someone, will provide you with valuable insights.
- **S**hift and move information if necessary.
- **T**itle & **T**opic **S**entence are evident, clear, and match what you've written in the paragraph.

It is always helpful to be methodical and to reread your draft several times and note or make changes. If you are working on a computer, you may find it helpful to save a draft and then revise a new document so that you can compare the two versions after you have finished the macro-revision.

MICRO-REVISION:

Micro means small, so with micro-revision, you are looking at your paragraph on a smaller scale considering your sentences and how they fit together. Some people call this **local revision**. During the micro-revision step, you will need to look at your sentences and check them for clarity, variety, and effectiveness:

- **Clarity:** Do the sentences clearly communicate to the reader? Are there any sentences that need additional information or restructuring to be clear?
- **Variety:** Are the four sentence types used in the paragraph?
- **Effectiveness:** Do the sentences in the paragraph work together to create a clear and cohesive message to the reader? If not, have you included necessary and appropriate transitional words and phrases?

If your paragraph lacks transitions, use the transitions in the chart below to help you create a smooth, logical flow of ideas in your paragraph. You will also find that you need to link all the details and sentences together carefully when you are composing a paragraph. Transitions not only provide a smooth shift from one idea to the next, but they will also create logical relationships within your topic.

Addition	Emphasis	Sequence	Example	Comparison
furthermore in addition moreover lastly as a matter of fact	in fact surprisingly in any case indeed certainly	first, second, third, etc. Next Then Finally at this point	for example in this case such as notably in particular	on the other hand similarly however in contrast whereas

Note that each of these words or phrases will help you to generate more information and supporting details. In addition, using these words will make your paragraph easier to read.

A note on Collaboration and Peer Revision: As you have hopefully found over the last three weeks, one of the most helpful activities for writers when revising is to share writing with others. Equally, and perhaps more, helpful is reading others' writing when you share the same assignment. There is no substitute for reading others' writing and getting feedback to help you gain perspective on your writing.

STEP 5 - EDITING

The final step in the writing process is editing. Some writers call this step proofreading because this is where you are considering the smaller details of your final draft. You check and correct your punctuation, spelling, and formatting. This is the final step because doing this earlier will be a waste of your time because you will find that your sentences and content will change, sometimes radically, when you are revising.

Now that the paper is set in terms of content, organization, and sentence style, you can concentrate on rereading again with a close eye on grammar, punctuation, spelling, spacing, formatting, etc.

Almost all student writers use the five step writing process, but some do not complete each step in this order. Many back track along the way, repeat certain ones (especially steps 1, 3, and 4), or reverse step 2 and 3, so consider this a guide rather than a set pattern you must follow. Like any piece of writing, you may need to revise the five steps of the writing process in order to make them work for you.

Eventually, just like any process, you will make it your own, creating a process that meets your particular writing needs. For example, you may spend the majority of your time on Step 1 while someone else may spend most of her time on Step 4. Get to know the process by using it regularly until you find what works for you.

Sentence Errors

After you've considered the clarity, variety, and effectiveness of your sentences sentence, you will need to consider your sentences to be sure that they are working correctly. For this course, there are three types of errors to consider: Subject-Verb Agreement, Pronoun Antecedent Agreement, and Parallel Structure. Each of these errors will distract your reader and diminish your overall message.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

As you learned in Unit 3, subjects must agree in number with their verbs. If you have a single subject, you use the singular form of the verb. Likewise, if you have a plural subject, you will use the plural form of the verb.

- The students runs down the street. (Incorrect)
- The students run down the street. (Correct)

OR

- The president and his advisors walks together on the lawn. (Incorrect)
- The president and his advisors walk together on the lawn. (Correct)

PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement: Pronouns stand in for or refer to a noun. Therefore, pronouns not only need to agree in number, but they also need to agree with the antecedent, the earlier word or phrase to which the pronoun refers.

- The student lost their notebook. (Incorrect)

In this example, “student” is the antecedent. Since student is singular, the pronoun needs to be singular. When we know the gender of the student, then we can rewrite the sentence correctly:

- The student lost his notebook. (Correct)
- The student lost her notebook. (Correct)
- The student lost his or her notebook. (Correct)

You can also take the original sentence and correct it by making the subject and object plural:

- The students lost their notebooks. (Correct)

Some pronouns, like each, anybody, everybody and someone, will always be singular. Therefore, they will agree with a singular pronoun.

- Has anyone lost their notebook? (Incorrect)
 - Has anyone lost his or her notebook? (Correct)
-

PARALLEL STRUCTURE

For your sentences, parallel structure occurs when you list items, phrases, or clauses in the same grammatical form. Look at this example of a sentence with faulty parallel structure:

- For exercise, Tara liked snowboarding, surfing, and to run. (Incorrect)
- For exercise, Tara liked snowboarding, surfing, and running. (Correct)

In this sentence, the writer needed to keep the items listed in the same form. In this case, the items needed to be present participles. In some cases, you may have longer items listed as phrases or clauses that will need to agree. Look at this example:

- In his observation of the animals, Josef noticed that they would assemble by species in groups next to the water hole, **to forage** individually in the jungle for food, and then sleep in smaller family groups. (Incorrect)
- In his observation of the animals, Josef noticed that they would assemble by species in groups next to the water hole, **forage** individually in the jungle for food, and sleep in smaller, family groups. (Correct)

Punctuation

After your sentences are edited for agreement and parallel structure, you will read your paragraph looking specifically for punctuation. Since you have already finalized all the content of your paragraph (topic, topic sentence, details, concluding sentence) and crafted your writing style, you will re-read your paragraph a few more times. This time, you will only be looking for punctuation. Many students even read their work backwards, one sentence at a time, so as not to skip over words or punctuation. Other students will touch the tip of their pen or pencil to each word and punctuation mark to carefully consider each mark on the paper.

For this course, you will study three types of punctuation: (1) Commas, (2) Apostrophes, (3) Semicolons.

COMMAS

You will remember from Unit 4 that commas are used in a variety of ways when punctuating clauses, phrases, and the four sentence types. A common mistake you may have been taught about commas is that if there is a pause, you need to insert a comma. Instead, if you understand how commas work in sentences, then you can think through whether or not you need a comma.

There are many rules for commas, but for this course, you will study a few rules that will help you the most at this stage. When you reread your paragraph, look closely at each comma to see if it fits into one of the following categories.

COMMAS WITH INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS

Use a comma after a word, phrase, or subordinate clause that precedes the main clause.

- Finally, the antelope gave up and succumbed to the superior strength of the lion.
- Humming softly to herself, Wilhelmina explored every inch of the hardware store.
- Although he appeared innocent at first, the man's story began to break down under the scrutiny of the detective's questions.

COMMAS IN A SERIES

Use a comma in between items in a series. In formal academic writing, the last comma is usually preferred.

- Would you like one, two, or three scoops?
- Clarence's special trail mix contained peanuts, chili peppers, malt balls, and dried apricots.
- Her analysis of the story argued that Leticia was actually confused upon first meeting Oscar, Mary herself benefited from the purloined letter, and the outcome of the story was comic rather than tragic.

COMMAS WITH COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

As you will remember from Unit 4, use a comma after the first clause and before the coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.

- My favorite band is coming to town, so I will be camping out to get a ticket.
- An assortment of visitors appeared at the gate, but the ambassador never acknowledged them.

COMMA SPLICES AND FUSED SENTENCES

A comma splice is an error that occurs when you join two independent clauses with a comma. Instead, use a coordinating conjunction, period, semicolon, or a semicolon and adverbial conjunction.

- Comma Splice: The last time we saw him was in December, you won't believe how much he has changed since then.
- Correct: The last time we saw him was in December, but you won't believe how much he has changed since then.
- Correct: The last time we saw him was in December. You won't believe how much he has changed since then.
- Correct: The last time we saw him was in December; you won't believe how much he has changed since then.
- Correct: The last time we saw him was in December; however, you won't believe how much he has changed since then.

Closely related to a comma splice is the **fused sentence**. This occurs when a writer joins two independent clauses with no punctuation. You fix a fused sentence the same way as you do a comma splice. Here is an example, using the same sentence above, of a fused sentence:

- Fused Sentence: The last time we saw him was in December you can't believe how much he changed since then.

You would correct a fused sentence in the same way that you correct a comma splice.

When you can recognize independent clauses in your writing, you will begin to eliminate comma splices and fused sentences. Study Unit Four again if you feel like you need some additional review.

SUBORDINATION

As you studied in Unit 4, when a subordinate clause appears at the beginning of a sentence, use a comma after the subordinate clause. However, if the subordinate clause appears at the end, you will usually omit the comma. You may remember this example:

- **Because it might rain,** I will bring an umbrella to the festival. (comma)
- I will bring an umbrella to the festival **because it might rain.** (no comma)

Subordination is yet another way to fix a comma splice or a fused sentence. Look at this example:

- Comma Splice: The last time we saw him was in December, you can't believe how much he changed since then.
- Corrected with Subordination: Although we just saw him in December, you can't believe how much he has changed since then.

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are used to show possession or to mark a contraction. You can learn how to think through whether an apostrophe is correct by analyzing each apostrophe in your writing. You can focus on two types:

- Possessive apostrophe: We found Hank's hammer. (Instead of the awkward phrase "the hammer of Hank," write "Hank's hammer.")
- Contraction: I can't make it. (In this sentence, "cannot" has been shortened to "can't")

Since most academic and formal writing does not allow for contractions, possessive apostrophes will be your focus. The rules are relatively simple.

Use an apostrophe followed by "s" with a singular noun to mark possession:

- The keeper filled the tiger's bowl with water.
- The spider sucked the juice out of the aphid's paralyzed body.

Use an apostrophe with a plural noun to mark possession:

- The keeper filled the tigers' bowls with water.
- The wind knocked the birds' nest out of the tree.

THE EXCEPTION: IT

Possession will be marked for every noun with an apostrophe. Also, nearly all pronouns have their own possessive cases, so you will never use an apostrophe with pronouns, including "it." However, "it" is a special case. "It" is the one pronoun that you need to mark possessive. To mark "it" as possessive, simply add an "s."

- The tree fell because of its own weight.
- The wind blew its way into the house.
- The bicycle had lost its fender.

Many students will attempt to mark the possessive of "it" with an apostrophe and "s." However, "it's" is a contraction for "it is." This is simply an exception to remember:

- Its = Possessive
- It's = Contraction for "It is"

You can use apostrophes a few other ways, but for now, concentrate on correctly marking nouns possessive.

SEMICOLONS

As you learned in Unit 4, semicolons can join two complete sentences. Also, as you studied in the section on commas above, a semicolon can fix a comma splice.

Semicolons act like a period in some cases, like a comma in others.

When a semicolon joins two independent clauses, use it like a period:

- Mark found the new route easy; the other climbers were impressed.
- The balloon floated up to the ceiling; the baby cried.

Even though you can use semicolons like a period, you should use them sparingly, usually with an adverbial conjunction:

- The new law goes into effect today; therefore, you can no longer turn right on a red light between 4 and 6 p.m.

You can also use semicolons in between items in a series when those items have commas.

- An unidentified flying object was spotted in Roswell, New Mexico; Amarillo, Texas; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Paducah, Kentucky.
- He disliked ice cream, cookies, and cake; horror movies, cherub statues, and violins; and sleeping, playing dominoes, and counting on his fingers.

Capitalization, Spelling, and Commonly Confused Words – Homophones

CAPITALIZATION

When editing, you will need to read your paragraph carefully to be sure that you have capitalized your words correctly. At this point, there are a few simple rules to remember:

- Always capitalize "I" – Simple memorize this rule, for English is the only language that capitalizes "I."
 - Always capitalize the first word of a sentence – Another rule that will seem obvious to you, but knowing when a sentence begins and ends gets more complicated as you write longer and more complicated sentences.
 - Capitalize proper nouns – As you learned in Unit 2, proper nouns like New York, Marilyn Monroe, and Coursera will be capitalized because they refer to a specific place, person, thing, living creature, or concept.
-

SPELLING

Many misspelled words will not be caught by spellcheck, so it's important that you learn some of the basic rules of spelling and keep a list with you during editing of words that you commonly misspell or confuse. Keeping such a list will help you to become more confident when you are writing with the aid of a computer.

The best way to improve your spelling is to keep a list of words that you commonly misspell. There are many ways you might do this, but here is a suggested format:

Misspelled word	Correctly spelled word	Spelling rule
recieve	receive	i before e (except after c)
athelete	athlete	
garantee	guarantee	
happyness	Happiness	change final y to i

As the list grows, you will find yourself memorizing the spellings of words. Keep your list with you when you are writing either at your desk or when you are writing an in-class assignment.

You can already see a couple of rules in the list above. While not every misspelled word will have a rule that may help you remember the spelling, there are a few helpful rules to remember.

- **"i before e except after c":** You may have heard this common rule over the years, and it is generally helpful. **Friend** and **deceive** fit neatly into this rule as do many other words like **receipt**, **believe**, **thief**, and **patience**. However, there are words in English where the combination of the vowels ei is pronounced A (ay) as in **freight**, **weight**, and **neighbor**. There are also many exceptions to the rule with words like **weird** and **caffeine**.
- **Change the final y to i before adding a suffix:** When you add a suffix to a word that ends in y like happy, you will change the y to i.
 - happy+ness=happiness
 - merry+ment=merriment
- **Double the last consonant when adding certain suffixes to certain words:** As with the previous rule, adding suffixes will change the spelling of certain words. In short words like mop and mad, you will double the last letter when you add certain suffixes.
 - mop+ed=mopped
 - mop+ing=mopping
 - mad+er=madder
 - mad+est=maddest
- **Keeping or dropping the final silent e:** With words that have a silent e, like love and hate, you will keep the e if the suffix begins with a consonant but drop it if the suffix begins with a vowel.
 - love+ly=lovely
 - love+ing=loving
 - hate+ful=hateful
 - hate+ing=hating

There are many spelling rules, so seek out the ones that will help you correct your consistently misspelled words. However, there is no substitute for having your own personal list of commonly misspelled words because for every spelling rule in English, you may find many exceptions.

COMMONLY CONFUSED WORDS – HOMOPHONES

Many words in the English language are confusing because they sound exactly the same, but they are spelled and mean different things. These are words that spellcheck will never catch because knowing which one is right depends on the meaning of the word. Here is a brief list of some of the most commonly confused words:

- **two** – the number two, as in “I have two apples.”
- **too** – in addition, as in “I, too, would like one.”
- **to** – direction, as in “Please give one to me.”

Example: The **two** acrobats were **too** tired **to** perform.

- **your** – possessive pronoun, as in “Hand me your coat.”
- **you’re** – contraction of **you+are**, as in “**You’re** tired.”

Example: **You’re** flying **your** kite too near the tree.

- **there** – direction, as in “You will find it over there.”
- **their** – 3rd person plural pronoun, as in “Take their coats, please.”
- **they’re** – contraction for **they+are**, as in “They’re running away now.”

Example: **They’re** riding **their** bicycles over **there**.

- **passed** – to move by, as in “She passed by the newsstand on her way to work.”
- **past** – of an earlier time, as in “The sword was a relic from the past.”

Example: In the **past**, I easily **passed** my exams.

- **accept** – to willingly receive something, as in “I accept your proposal.”
- **except** – to exclude, as in “I like everything except the mauve couch.”

Example: We can **accept** everyone **except** those who are too advanced.

- **than** – compares two or more things, as in “Your bicycle is newer than mine.”
- **then** – indicates time or sequence, as in “First, you turn it on, and then you change the input.”

Example: Back **then**, you were taller **than** I was.

- **are** – plural form of “to be,” as in “They are all happy now.”
- **our** – pronoun marking possession, as in “Our house is still standing.”

Example: **Are** you coming to **our** house for tea?

- **its** – indicates possession in neuter case, as in “The sun shone its rays on the ocean.”
- **it’s** – contraction for “it is,” as in “It’s a nice day.”

Example: **It’s** too expensive to get **its** engine repaired.

Allow yourself ample time to edit your writing because it can take several readings of your writing to notice and correct all of the possible errors.

Following the writing process, and modifying it to fit your needs and preferences, is essential. Remember that you will likely move back and forth between steps even as you move methodically through the process. However, once you arrive at the editing step and are content with your ideas and structure, you should finish your project through careful editing.

You've now reviewed the parts of speech, subjects and verbs, clauses and phrases, and now composing and editing. You are ready to write a paragraph. As you move through the writing process, remember the tools and information that you've learned along the way.

Happy writing!

Larry Barkley has been teaching for nearly 35 years at both public and private colleges and universities. For the last 23 years he has taught various levels of English at MSJC. His writings have appeared in many publications, and he has presented at numerous conferences. He co-authored, with Rise Axelrod and Charles Cooper, the 4th and 5th editions of *Sticks and Stones and Other Student Essays*. His newest book, co-authored with Christine Sandoval, *Grammar and Usage, Naturally*, from Cengage Publishing, will be released December 2013. Larry is one of the professors responsible for the design and content of this course.

Jerome Billins, as the primary editor and production coordinator for the *Crafting an Effective Writer* videos, brings his knowledge and 20 years of experience as a successful and award winning production company owner and cinematographer. Currently at MSJC, he shares his passion with students as a video production instructor and club advisor for FAVE (Film Animation Video Entertainment) and directs and produces short films and promotional projects for the school.

Evelyn Biler Menz has spent the last eight years at MSJC, where she is a Coordinator of Basic Skills and the Learning Center on the San Jacinto campus. Her interest in providing academic and educational support for students spans the thirteen years she has worked in education. Her goal was to help new teachers develop skills that accommodate student-centered learning and support divergent thinking in and out of the class room. That goal is still one she continues to work toward. Evelyn provides general English support to this project and manages the Community TAs.

Ted Blake, is the Coordinator of the Basic Skills Program and Learning Center at Mt. San Jacinto College in Menifee, CA. He has been recognized as an outstanding teacher at the University of Kansas, University of Georgia, Principia College, and Idyllwild Arts Academy as well as being voted faculty of the year at MSJC in 2011. After teaching English for 20 years, Ted is now coordinating efforts in and has given numerous presentations about teaching innovation in the community colleges with an emphasis on non-cognitive skill building, the flipped classroom, and meta-cognitive teaching strategies. Ted is one of the professors responsible for the design and content of this course.

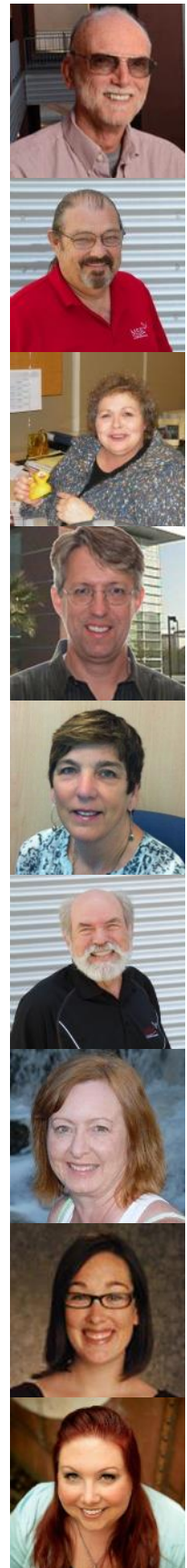
Pat James as the Dean of Distance Learning at MSJC, received awards for her innovation in use of technology in teaching and learning, developed the colleges @MSJC Teaching and Learning Academy, which enrolls 300 teachers, co-directed the California @ONE Professional Development Project, teaches the Introduction to Online Teaching and Learning class for @ONE, does in-person and online trainings as requested. She is the lead administrator for *Crafting an Effective Writer*.

Tom Merritt One of two members of our video production team, Tom has over 40 years of experience in the film and video industry. He currently teaches video production classes in the MSJC Multimedia Department.

Lorrie Ross, is the Coordinator of the Writing Center at Mt. San Jacinto College in Menifee, CA. She has been an English instructor at Mt. San Jacinto College for over twenty years, with prior teaching experience at various Los Angeles, California community colleges. She has worked with online writing instruction for over ten years. Currently, Lorrie is focused on acceleration in basic skill writing courses and other basic skills instructional improvements. Lorrie is one of the professors responsible for the design and content of this Course.

Corinne Sheltren is an instructional designer who also teaches Multimedia Production courses at Mt. San Jacinto College. Her experience in project management is extensive and she brings that and her experience as an online student to this project. Corinne is the operational project manager for this project and assists with instructional design, as well.

Anna Stirling has taught computer applications, primarily Microsoft Office, and other introduction courses for the Computer Information Systems department, both online & traditionally, for over eight years at Mt. San Jacinto College. In addition to teaching online for MSJC, she is an avid faculty trainer in course design & management and coordinates a three day professional development event each semester. Outside of MSJC she works as a technology trainer, assists with the coordination of the Online Teaching Conference, and serves as the Online Teaching Certification Program Coordinator as part of @ONE. Anna is the designer/programmer on this project.



C E W T E A M



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