

The 14 Grammar Rules Most Likely to be Tested

- **Rule 1** - Subject-Verb Agreement
- **Rule 2** - Noun-Pronoun Agreement
- **Rule 3** - Pronoun Subjects & Objects
- **Rule 4** - Pronoun Consistency
- **Rule 5** - Correct Tense
- **Rule 6** - Adjectives & adverbs
- **Rule 7** - Parallel Construction
- **Rule 8** - Run-on Sentences & Sentence Fragments
- **Rule 9** - Dangling Modifiers (Participles/participial phrases)
- **Rule 10** - Sentence logic
- **Rule 11** - Fixing commonly messed up expressions
- **Rule 12** - Logical comparison
- **Rule 13** - Comparative/superlative forms of words
- **Rule 14** - Spelling

But before we begin...

- **Noun**—person, place, thing, idea (joy), quality (stickiness), or act (drooling)
- **Pronoun**—word that takes the place of another noun (The Serpent is evil. *He* is cruel. *He* is a pronoun because it takes the place of *Serpent*.)
- **Verb**—word that expresses action (jump) or a state of being (be). Tells what's happening in a sentence.
- **Subject**—noun or pronoun that “does” the action of the verb in the sentence (*He* drooled. *He* is the subject because *he* is the thing that drooled.)
- **Object**—noun or pronoun that the verb acts on. (He tickled *me*. *Me* is the object because *me* is the thing that got tickled.)
- **Preposition**—Words like *to at, in, up, over, under, after, of*. They go with objects. (*in* the house...*in* is the preposition & *house* is the object.)
- **Singular**—single thing or unit (noodle)
- **Plural**—more than one thing (noodles)

Rule 1: Subject-Verb Agreement

- Subject & verb must agree in number, so isolate the subject & the verb & make sure they match.
- **Incorrect:** The proctor, as well as the students, were overcome by the tedious ticking of the timer and fell asleep.
 - **Isolate** *subject:* proctor (singular) *verb:* were (plural) *combine:*
the proctor were overcome
- **Correct:** The proctor, as well as the students, was overcome by the tedious ticking of the timer and fell asleep.
 - **Problem:** the plural students; it is set off by commas, so it's not part of the subject. Three expressions similar to *as well* are: *in addition to, along with, and together with*

Rule 2: Noun-Pronoun Agreement

- Singular subjects take singular nouns; plural subjects take plural nouns. The 13 singular subjects above each take a singular pronoun.
- **Incorrect:** Not one of the boys read *their* SAT book.
- **Correct:** Not one of the boys read *his* SAT book.

Rule 3: Pronoun Subjects & Objects

- You must know when to use the words in the column on the left & when to use those on the right:

Subjects	Objects
I	Me
He	Him
She	Her
They	Them
We	Us
Who	Whom

- **Examples**
- *I* like hotdogs, but hotdogs don't like *me*.
- *She* is good enough for Grape-Nuts, but are Grape-Nuts good enough for *her*?

Rule 4: Pronoun consistency

- Pronouns should be consistent throughout a sentence.
 - **Incorrect:** The more **you** study for the SAT, the more one thinks about moving to Mongolia.
 - **Correct:** The more **you** study for the SAT, the more **you** think about moving to Mongolia.

Rule 5: Correct Tense

- Make sure the action is consistent. Look for key “time words” such as *when*, *as*, *after*, and so forth.
 - **Incorrect:** After he **ate** the newt and **brushed** his teeth, I will kiss him.
 - **Correct:** After he **eats** the newt and **brushes** his teeth, I **will** kiss him.

Rule 6: Adjectives & Adverbs

- **Adjectives** describe a noun or pronoun and answer **three questions**: What kind? Which one? How many?
 - The _____ wombat (lascivious)
- **Adverbs** tell *where, when, how, or to what extent (how often or how much)*
 - The wombat did it ____ (lasciviously)

Rule 7: Parallel Construction

- Ideas that are parallel (related) should be expressed the same way.
 - **Incorrect:** I like spitting, drooling, and to slurp.
 - **Correct:** I like spitting, drooling, and slurping.

Rule 8: Run-on Sentences & Sentence Fragments

- A **run-on** is usually two complete sentences that are incorrectly joined by a comma instead of separated by a period or semi-colon.
 - **Incorrect:** JP ate the mysterious object, it was a noodle.
 - **Correct:** JP ate the mysterious object; it was a noodle. **OR** JP ate the mysterious object. It was a noodle.
- Sentence **fragments** are parts of sentences that are made up to look like real sentences.
 - **Incorrect:** All the kids had rashes on their bodies. Especially those with uranium lunch boxes.
 - **Correct:** All the kids had rashes on their bodies, especially those with uranium lunch boxes.

Rule 9: Dangling Modifiers (Participles/participial phrases)

- **Incorrect:** Taking the test, his copy of the cheat sheet was in his pocket.
 - *The sentence implies that the cheat sheet was taking the test.*
- **Correct:** Taking the test, he had his copy of the cheat sheet in his pocket.

Rule 10: Sentence Logic

- These questions will be grammatically correct on the test but don't do a good job of saying what the writer wants them to say.
 - **Sample:** There are often sentences that are sentences that are grammatically correct, and do not say what the writer wants them to say.
- correct, and do not say what
- correct and do not say that which
- correct but do not say what**
- correct, with the exception that
- correct saying not what

Rule 11: Fixing Commonly Messed Up Expressions

- Sometimes "they" will deliberately mess up an expression to try to foil you. The only way to prepare for this type of question is by becoming familiar with standard, formal English and being able to hear or see which words or phrases just sound or look wrong.
 - **Incorrect:** Since it's a beautiful day, I'd just assume walk.
 - **Correct:** Since it's a beautiful day, I'd just as soon walk.

Rule 12: Logical Comparison

- Make sure that when you make a comparison, you compare two like things.
 - **Incorrect:** My mother's salary is higher than Jane's mother.
 - **Correct:** My mother's salary is higher than Jane's mother's (salary).

Rule 13: Comparative/superlative Forms of Words

- **Last few reminders**
 - Don't split infinitives (**incorrect:** "to slowly walk" **correct** "to walk slowly")
 - Don't use slang (chirp) or clichés (cold as ice)
 - *Either* goes with *or*; *neither* goes with *nor*
 - When referring to a country, don't use "they"
 - The US is the richest county in the world. They have the highest GNP. (*It has* the highest GNP.)

Rule 14: Spelling

- **Get a dictionary and use it.**