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Grammar Review

DIRECTIONS: Do the practice exercises in each section below **after** reading how to fix these common grammatical errors.

PART 1

ERROR 1: Sentence Fragments

A sentence is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought. A normal sentence in English will contain a subject, a verb, and an object.

Example: Lucy (subject) ran (verb) to the store to buy eggs (object) for tomorrow's breakfast.

When a sentence is written that is not complete it is said to be a *sentence fragment*. To better understand the causes of sentence fragments, try to identify what is missing (subject, verb, or object) from each of the sentences.

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about sentence fragments on pages 105-109 in your textbook, *Process & Practice*, 6th Edition, and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Diagnostic** – pg. 110-112 - #1-35 - **Check your answers before attempting unit work.**
- 2) **Unit Work** – pg. 113 #1-10
pg. 116 - #16-20
pg. 117 - #1-5

ERROR 2: Run-on Sentences

Source: <http://www.myenglishteacher.net/runonsentences.html>

A run-on sentence occurs when two or more complete sentences are joined together. This usually happens when two or more independent clauses are joined without punctuation or conjunctions.

Run-on sentences can also include **comma splice errors** which are when two independent clauses (sentences) are joined by commas without also using a conjunction.

There are four ways to correct run-on sentences:

1. Write each of the sentences as separate sentences using appropriate punctuation and capitalization. Make 2 complete sentences. **Method #1**
2. Connect the two sentences with a semicolon. **Method #2**
3. Connect the two sentences with a comma or coordinating conjunction and be sure to include the comma before the conjunction. **Method #3**
(Review coordinators – pg. 139)
4. Rewrite the two sentences making one of the two a subordinate clause or phrase using subordinating conjunctions. **Method #4**
(Review subordinators – pg. 108-9)

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about run-on sentences on pages 139-140 (run ons) and 119-120 (comma splices) in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Diagnostic** – pg. 141-142 - #1-30 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.
pg. 122-124 - #1-40 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.
- 2) **Unit Work** – pg. 127 - #1,3,5,7,9
pg. 146 - #1-5
Decide which method of correction you will use for each. You may use two methods for longer sentences.

ERROR 3: Misplaced Modifiers

Modifiers are words or groups of words that describe, qualify, or otherwise identify another word or group of words. A modifier may be a single word, a phrase, or it may be a clause.

Example: The guidebook says that one can visit the Peace Tower **on page thirty-seven.** (Incorrect)

Correct: The guide book says **on page thirty-seven** that one can visit the Peace Tower.

Or

Correct: **On page thirty-seven** the guidebook says that one can visit the Peace Tower.

General Rules of Modifier Placement

- Place modifiers like *almost, even, ever, hardly, just, merely, nearly, and only* immediately before the words they modify.
- Place modifiers like *who, which, or that* immediately after the words they modify.

Special Rules of Modifier Placement

- Avoid placing a modifier between the word *to* and the verb that follows.
- Avoid placing a modifier between a verb and the object being modified.
- Avoid placing a modifier between a preposition and its object.
- Avoid separating coordinate modifiers.

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about misplaced modifiers on pages 176-177 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Diagnostic – pg. 178 - #1-20 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.**
- 2) **Unit Work – Level 1 – pg. 180 #1-5
Level 2 – pg. 182 #1-5**

ERROR 4: Faulty Parallelism

When you are writing a sentence you need to make sure that all elements are similar in meaning and expressed in parallel form. In other words, all words that are linked should have the same form. By employing parallel structure the meaning of your writing will be clarified and will emphasize equally important ideas.

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about faulty parallelism on pages 185-186 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Diagnostic - Parallel Form, Level 1 – pg. 187-188 - #1-20
Check your answers before attempting unit work.**
- 2) **Unit Work - Parallel Form, Level 2- pg. 189-190 - #1, 3, 5, 7, 9.**

PART 2

ERROR 5: Pronoun Usage

Pronouns are words that can be used instead of a noun. We use them so we don't have to keep repeating a noun.

Example: John is a student, and **John** is going to university soon.

Instead: John is a student, and **he** is going to university soon.

Using the pronoun **he** instead of the noun **John** makes the sentence less repetitive.

Pronouns, such as **I/me, you, he/him, she/her, it, we/us and they/them**, are words used in place of a noun. These can be divided into either subject or object pronouns depending upon their placement or use in a sentence. **Subject** pronouns do the action of the sentence and **object** pronouns have the action done to them.

Subject pronoun "I" – **I** ate a sandwich.

Object pronoun "me" – The sandwich was eaten by **me**.

Use the following table of *subject pronouns* and *object pronouns* to guide you through the following activity.

	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns
First Person (singular)	I	me
First Person (plural)	we	us
Second Person (singular and plural)	you	you
Third Person (singular)	he, she, it	him, her, it
Third Person (plural)	they	them
	who	whom

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about pronouns on pages 161, 149-150 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Diagnostic - pg. 151-152 - #1-20 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.**
pg. 162-163 - #1-20 – Check your answers before attempting unit work.
- 2) **Unit Work - pg. 153-154 - #1-5**
pg. 163-164 - #21-40

ERROR 6: Subject/Verb agreement

In subject-verb agreement, the grammatical rule states that the verb must agree in number with its subject. A singular subject must have a singular verb. If a word refers to a plural subject then the verb must be plural. The following chart shows this:

Singular Subject	Singular Verb	Plural Subject	Plural Verb
I	met	we	meet
the dog	watches	the dogs	watch
he	works	they	work
It	leaves	they	leave

Sometimes there are problems when a noun rather than a pronoun is the subject of the verb. The table below outlines some examples:

Incorrect	Correct
The church <u>groupmeet</u> at noon every Sunday.	The church <u>group meets</u> at noon every Sunday.
The <u>girls</u> in the choir <u>sings</u> a capella on five new songs.	The <u>girls</u> in the choir <u>sing</u> a capella on five new songs.

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about subject/verb agreement on pages 159-160 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Diagnostic - pg. 165-166 - #1-30 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.**

2) Unit Work - Write the correct word choice in the space after the sentence.

1. Log houses with wood- burning stoves (is, are) still seen in rural communities.
2. There (is, are) many reasons why people should be recycling wood-burning stoves.
3. To build a log house, each volunteer (was, were) divided into teams depending on his skills.
4. A team of carpenters (is, are) needed to get the logs ready to be hoisted into place on the frame.
5. Once the logs are in place, the inside walls (was, were) whitewashed or plastered.
6. A single log house built in this time period (was, were) known as a pen.
7. Sometimes, two pens (was, were) connected by a roofed passageway.
8. The roofed passageway of the two pens (was, were) known as a dogtrot.
9. The dog trot (was, were) shelter for the family animals.
10. In today's log houses, the dogtrot, the animal resting place, (is, are) a foyer.

ERROR 7: Tricky Words

PRACTICE EXERCISES:

Read about commonly confused words on pages 193-194 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

1) Diagnostic - pg. 195-196 - #1-40 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.

2) Unit Work - Write the correct word choice in the space after the sentence.

1. Lola (might have, might of) cooked us a Mexican dinner.
2. Are (there, their, they're) more than 9 rules of capitalization?
3. Do they have (there, their, they're) textbooks?
4. I bought apples here last year, but I seem to remember paying more for them (then, than).
5. She did the assignment really (well, good) and received a (well, good) mark.
6. That (loose, lose) bolt could cause you to (loose, lose) your cargo.
7. The bus (passed, past) us at the corner, as it has so often in the (passed, past).

8. We wandered (between, among) the poppies, looking for the road to Oz.
9. (It's, Its) a shame the dog lost (it's, its) home in the fire.
10. (Whose, Who's) running shoes are by the door and (whose, who's) going to pick them up?
11. (To, Two, Too) many people are driving cars (to, two, too) work, causing global warming.
12. We ate our (dessert, desert) while riding camels in the (dessert, desert).
13. She used her words to great (effect, affect) in influencing the jury.
14. Today's students certainly do seem to read less (than, then) students in previous generations did.
15. Love rears (its, it's) ugly head.

PART 3

ERROR 8: Capitalization

While much of the English language has grammar rules which can be confusing, capitalization is one area where the rules are fairly fixed. Just follow the nine rules below and you should not go wrong.

1. Always capitalize the first word of every sentence.
Where is the best pizza joint in town?
2. Capitalize the first word in a quoted sentence.
Jill said, "Just come over to my house after school."
3. The days of week and months are always capitalized, but not the seasons.
Monday, Tuesday, June, September, spring, fall
4. Capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives, which are names of specific persons, places or things.
Nanaimo Clippers, Purdy's, Lantzville, British Columbia
5. Do not capitalize directions or points of a compass, but do capitalize the regions in a country.
Mike lives in the Southern Interior.
I drove east when I went to Toronto.
6. Capitalize all titles which have names, and the titles when they stand in place of names.
Doctor Lawson, General Abbott
"Mom, can you buy me a dog?"

7. In titles of books, movies, poems, paintings, etc, capitalize the first word and all important words.
Lord of the Rings
A Wrinkle in Time
8. Words like school, hotel, church and street are not capitalized unless they are part of a proper name.
The hotel down the hill has no vacancies.
There is the high school.
I go to Wellington High School.
9. Do not capitalize *a*, *an* and *the* unless they are a part of a proper name.
the PQ News
The New York Times

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Read about **capitalization** rules on pages 206-207 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Unit Work - Diagnostic - pg. 208-209 - #1-30 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.**

ERROR 9: The Comma

The best piece of advice I can give you regarding comma usage is never to use a comma without knowing, consciously, why. Use your head and the rules listed below to determine when and where a comma is needed.

Commas in compound sentences

A compound sentence contains two independent clauses (sentences) joined by a coordinator like for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Except for very short sentences, coordinators are always preceded by a comma. So, instead of expressing two ideas in separate sentences you can use a comma to unite the two thoughts that are closely related to form one compound sentence.

Example:It was cold. We left the rink.

Example:It was cold, **so** we left the rink.

The comma for items in a series

There are three rules to remember when using commas in a series:

1. A series can be words, phrases or clauses but must be three or more in number.

Example: Connor likes apples, oranges, pears, and plums.

Example: Yesterday we ran over the hill, through the bushes, and up the mountains.

Example: She cooked, she cleaned, and she worried about Jim.

2. The conjunction *and*, *or*, or *nor* must connect the series before the last item.
3. Use a comma to separate the items in a series including the item immediately before *and*, *or*, or *nor*.

The comma – Introducers/Interrupters

Sometimes you may start a sentence with an adverb, phrase, or clause. Use a comma to separate it from the main clause.

Example: Thankfully, Graeme was not injured in the accident. (WORD)

Example: Beginning in September, the school board will charge students for bussing. (PHRASE)

Example: Until I see you can handle the pressure, you will not be the starting pitcher. (CLAUSE)

The comma – Nonessential elements

Sometimes when you are writing you want to add some information into a sentence that might not be essential. Whether it is a word, phrase, or clause, use a pair of commas to separate the information from the main sentence. The words in bold are considered nonessential in the examples below.

Example: The best hockey player in the world, **Bobby Orr**, was a defenseman for the Boston Bruins.

Example: Watching hockey in the 1960's, **the Golden Age of Hockey**, must have been a true hockey fan's dream.

Example: The gardeners wanted to plant goutweed, **a plant that will grow anywhere**, as a border along the property.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Read about **comma** rules on pages 129-131 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

- 1) **Unit Work - Diagnostic - pg. 132-133 - #1-40 - Check your answers before attempting unit work.**

ERROR 10: The semicolon

The semicolon is a very powerful punctuation mark. It can function like a comma, but it is stronger. However, it cannot act as a period. The semicolon can unite two independent clauses into one sentence if they are related.

Example: John Helton was a premier defensive player for the Calgary Stampeders. John Helton only won one Schenley Award.

Final: John Helton was a premier defensive player for the Calgary Stampeders; he only won one Schenley Award.

NOTE: For the semicolon to work, the two sentences it joins must be linked together. If they are not closely related, then use a period and create two sentences.

You can also use a semicolon when the two sentences are linked by a *transition* such as *however*, *therefore*, *on the other hand*, etc. In these cases, the semicolon comes before the connectives.

Example: George Bell played for the Toronto Blue Jays; however, he never was rookie of the year, won a World Series title, or American League batting championship.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Read about **semi-colon** rules on pages 134-135 in your textbook and then do the following activities. Also review rules for use of **colons**, **question marks**, and **exclamation points**.

1) Unit Work - Diagnostic - pg. 137-138 - #1-40

ERROR 11: The Apostrophe

Apostrophes indicate possession, or ownership, in today's language. Following the five rules below will make it easy to understand the use of the apostrophe.

1. To indicate ownership in a singular noun or indefinite pronoun, add 's.
someone's coat
Billie's hat
the boss's desk
2. Possessive pronouns never have apostrophes, even though they may end in an *s*.

my	mine
our	ours
your	yours
their	theirs
her	hers
his	
whose	
its	

3. Plural nouns that already end in *es* or *s* merely need an apostrophe at the end to indicate possession.
the boys' house
five soldiers' guns
the Jones' car
4. If the plural noun ends with any letter other than *s*, add the 's to indicate possession.
the dog's bowl
children's playground

5. Some expressions of time and money always have an apostrophe, even though they do indicate possession.

a months' vacation

three week's pay

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Read about **apostrophe** rules on pages 201-202 in your textbook and then do the following activities.

1) Unit Work - Diagnostic - pg. 203-205 - #1-40

ERROR 10: Quotation Marks – Direct Quotations/Punctuation Titles

A direct quotation is used when you use another person's words exactly as he said or wrote them. The most common usage of a direct quotation comes in the form of dialogue. There are four basic rules to remember when using direct quotations.

1. There will always be pairs of quotations; do not open a quotation without remembering to close it.

Example: Judy said, "My back is sore from all of this gardening."

2. If the quoted material is a complete sentence, then capitalize the first letter of the quote.

Example: While working on his car, Leroy said, "The brakes are a real mess. I need to replace them."

3. If the quoted material is only a fragment of the sentence, do not use a capital letter.

Example: The eyewitness report of the accident was very descriptive, she stated that the car "exploded in a fiery ball" when it hit the semi-truck.

4. If the direct quote is broken in mid-sentence, do not use a capital letter in the second part of the quotation.

Example: "I was able to drive my car half way to Calgary," Mr. Jones said, "but I wish it would not have broken down on me."

Note: The period goes inside the quotation marks.

Punctuating Titles

Rule #1

Short works or works that appear within a longer work are punctuated with quotation marks " "

These would include

Chapters within a book

Songs on a CD

Short poems

Newspaper/magazine articles

Television/radio episodes

Short stories

Rule #2

Longer works are either *italicized* or underlined.

These would include

Books

Films

Plays

Long Poems

Works of art

Television/radio programs

Newspapers/magazines

CDs

Example: William Golding's Lord of the Flies contains chapters titled "Beast from Water", "Beast from Air", and "Fire on the Mountain."

Example: Nevermind was Nirvana's first #1 album with songs like "Breed," "Come As You Are," and "Stay Away."

PRACTICE EXERCISES

Read about **quotation marks** on page 121 in your textbook and then do the following worksheet.

1) Unit Work - Do the following questions by correctly using quotation marks.

1. Time is a good magazine with articles on the man and woman of the year and one called Rufus the Wonder Dog.
2. Remember said the coach we are out to win the national championship.
3. Tomorrow said James I'll call Uncle Melvin.
4. Oh, can't we go on the later train asked Ellie.
5. Yes replied her mother that's a good idea, Ellie.
6. The Vancouver Sun ran an article on marathon running called Timed Out.
7. Open your books to page 72 said the teacher and begin reading at the bottom of the page.

8. Your head is too large exclaimed the barber.

9. He always called it my camp on the river when he was talking about his summer home.

10. They phoned and said that they would be late for our summer barbeque because something had come up.