

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Grammar Study Packet**

### **What does this packet cover?**

Sentence Structure (fragments, run-ons, comma splices)

Semicolons and Colons

Subject-Verb Agreement

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Parallel Structure

Misplaced Modifiers

Shifts in Tense, Voice, Mood, Person and Number

Commas

Apostrophes

Quotation Marks

Question Marks

Capital Letters

### **Fragments**

A fragment is a part of a sentence. It is merely a dependent clause: do not write it as though it were a complete sentence. Read through the following examples of sentence fragments:

1. Because there are two telephones on his desk.
2. Making his visitors wait outside while he pretends to be busy.
3. For example match-boxes.
4. Not necessarily the student who makes the best grades in high school.

A fragment's first word is usually a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun. When you spot one of these words at the beginning of a would-be sentence, you should double check to make sure the unit is properly joined to a main clause.

### **Subordinate Conjunctions**

after, although, as, as if, as though, because, before, except, if, since, though, unless, until, when, whereas

### **Relative Pronouns**

that, what, whatever, which, who, whoever, whom, whose

Note: an independent clause is a sentence: it can stand alone and make sense. A dependent clause is a fragment. It cannot stand alone and make sense.

### **TEST**

Put a check (✓) in the left-hand column if the sentence is actually a fragment.

1. If it is going to be used for projects such as public works or roads.
2. Although this year I haven't had time to swim very often.
3. We won the district championship.
4. I love music.
5. As he comes in each morning, glancing keenly about at the clerks in the outer office.
6. Father took me to the zoo.
7. Eventually losing himself in the business section of the city.
8. When the driver lost control of the car.
9. The lifeguard blew his whistle to call the man closer to shore. Because he was swimming alone in a restricted area.
10. Four of us were in the taxi.

## Correcting Run-ons and Comma Splices

Now that you know how to join ideas together with coordination conjunctions, here are two problems to avoid.

### 1. Run on

The air is filled with the sound of birds the grass is a beautiful shade of green.

### 2. Comma Splice

The air is filled with the sound of birds, the grass is a beautiful shade of green.

- Note that both the run-on and the comma splice contain two complete and independent ideas.
- The run-on has no conjunction to join the ideas together.
- The comma splice has only a comma to join the ideas together (but no conjunction). Use a coordinating conjunction and a comma to join together two complete and independent ideas.

### 3. Corrected

The air is filled with the sound of birds, and the grass is a beautiful shade of green.

Directions: Correct these run-ons and comma splices by using a coordinating conjunction and a comma.

1. The books are on the table near the window I don't know where the papers are.
2. The cat drank her milk noisily the dog just gulped down his raw meat.
3. I will go to Canada this summer, I want to hike in the mountains.
4. She made that dress from a pattern she can't sew a button to save her soul.
5. The table will have to go near the piano, we have to rearrange the whole room.
6. He always makes the baseball team this year his bad leg kept him on the bench most of the time.
7. This was the best movie I have ever seen, I am glad I saw it.

### Comma Splices

One sentence in each of the following group of four (4) sentences is grammatically incorrect. Pick out the incorrect sentence and circle its letter.

1. A. The girl was not interested in taking a math course; she was only interested in history courses.  
B. Eating is something we all must do, however, junk food can be harmful to our health.  
C. The test was a difficult one but was only a small part of my grade.  
D. Because the car is being fixed, I must find a ride to work each day.
2. A. While she wrote her research paper, Carol spent many hours in the library.  
B. Tourists bring money and publicity to vacation resorts but inconsiderately scatter their trash along the roadsides and in the parks.  
C. The corporation has been losing money; investors are worrying that their stock will fall in price.

- D. Movies use too much bad language, however their plots usually keep the viewer entertained.
3. A. The boy is five years old, he rides his tricycle, climbs trees, and plays with his dog.  
B. The drivers will, consequently, slow down when the road construction sign appears.  
C. A restaurant usually contains a waiting area with benches, a bar with stools, and a smoking and non-smoking section of tables.  
D. Credit is available without a finance charge; the store provides a three month contract plan consisting of equal payments.
4. A. I trained the dogs, but I always had misgivings that they would not mind me, their unpredictable behavior made me afraid to take them walking in public places.  
B. The drivers will, however, slow their speed to a minimum limit as they approach the pedestrian zone.  
C. Whenever the teacher's lecture was humorous, the entire class laughed loudly.  
D. No one likes Jane; she always insults her acquaintances.

## Semicolons and Colons

### The Semicolon

#### **Between two independent clauses**

Use a semicolon between independent clauses not joined by *and, but, or, not, for, so, yet*.

We hiked to the top of the mountain; we looked out over a valley covered with wildflowers.

Use a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb when it is followed by an independent clause.

We stayed until late afternoon; then we made our way back to camp.

Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses that are long and complex or that have internal punctuation.

Central City, located near Denver, was once a mining town; but now it is noted for its summer opera program.

#### **Between items in a series**

Use semicolons in a series between items that have internal punctuation.

In his closet Bill kept a photograph album, which was empty; several tennis shoes, all with holes in them; and the radiator cap from his first car, which he sold in his first year in college.

Do not use a semicolon between elements that are not coordinate.

INCORRECT

After publishing *The Day of the Jackal* and several other popular novels; Frederick Forsyth wrote his most exciting book, *The Devil's Alternative*. (Use a comma, not a semicolon.)

### **The Colon**

Use the colon before quotations, statements, and series that are introduced formally.

The geologist began his speech with a disturbing statement: "This country is short of rare metals."

Use a colon to introduce a formal series.

Bring the following items: food for a week, warm clothes, bedding, and a canteen.

### **Semicolons**

Supply semicolons as needed in the following sentences.

1. For most of us the lecture was a bore, for Grace, however, it was stimulating.
2. Don't ask if this assignment involves you, it does.
3. Although the bridge was damaged, we were able to cross the rampaging river.
4. The lecture delivered, Professor Brooks asked if there were any questions.
5. Arthur is a carefree fellow, nothing seems to bother him.
6. However dangerous my plan appears to you, I am certain it will be successful.
7. Your English class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, doesn't it?
8. The spectators were thrilled by Gibson's long touchdown run, they roared their approval.
9. The storm having passed, we continued our fifty-mile hike.
10. If Coach Perrin says he will retire in June, I am certain that we will win the state championship next year.
11. The crops were severely damaged by the drought, therefore, we were forced to abandon our little farm.
12. We must begin to prepare for final exams, they are only a week away.
13. Mayor Wilson is a busy man, in fact, he is seldom available for public interview.
14. I have studied the text carefully, thus, I shall surely do well in the examination.
15. Although I have several hobbies, stamp collecting is still my favorite.
16. Being exhausted, I lay down for a short nap, then the telephone rang.
17. I have never done well in foreign language classes, in fact, I once failed both French and Russian.
18. Ned has always respected my judgement and has never ridiculed my opinions.
19. You are under arrest, come with us to the police station.

### **Subject and Verb Agreement**

1. When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a plural verb.

--she and her friends are

When two singular subjects refer to the same person, a singular verb is required.

--My friend and cousin was responsible for my becoming a teacher.

2. When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by *or* or *nor*, use a singular verb.

--the book or the pen is

3. When a compound subject contains both a singular and plural noun or pronoun joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is nearer the verb. This rule is also used for *either/or* and *neither/nor*.

--the boy or his friends run

--his friends or the boy runs

--neither Larry nor his classmates were

If compound subjects are thought of as belonging together, a singular verb is used.

--ham and eggs

--horse and buggy

--gin and tonic

4. *Doesn't* is a contraction of *does not* and should be used only with a singular subject. *Don't* is a contraction of *do not* and should be used only with a plural subject.

--he doesn't

--they don't

5. Do not be misled by a phrase that comes between the subject and the verb. The verb agrees with the subject, not with a noun or pronoun in this phrase.

--one of the boxes is

--the people who listen to the music are

--the team captain, as well as his players, is

--the book, including all the chapters in the first section, is

--the woman with all the dogs walks

6. Singular or Plural Verbs Used with Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns usually refer to the nearest noun (not necessarily the subject of the sentence). Consequently, a relative pronoun is singular or plural according to the number of the word it refers to. This relationship determines the subject-verb agreement pattern.

Jones and Smith are like the fellow who (throws, throw) the baby out with the bath water.

*Who* refers to fellow, making *who* singular and requiring *throws* for correct pronoun-verb agreement.

7. The words *each*, *each one*, *either*, *neither*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *nobody*, *somebody*, *someone*, and *no one* are singular and require a singular verb.

--each one of these hot dogs is

--everybody knows

--either is

8. Nouns such as *civics*, *dollars*, *mathematics*, *measles*, and *news* require singular verbs even though they are plural in form.

- The news is boring.
- Mathematics is my favorite subject.

9. Nouns such as *scissors*, *tweezers*, *trousers*, and *shears* require plural verbs. (There are two parts to these things.)
10. Delayed Subjects -- in sentences beginning with *there is* or *there are*, the subject follows the verb. Since there is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows.
  - there are many questions
  - there is a question
11. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but that are considered singular as one unit and take a singular verb, such as: *group*, *team*, *committee*, *class*, *family*, *jury*. In a very few cases, the plural verb is used if the individuals in the group are thought of and specifically referred to.
  - The team runs.
  - The jury has left the courtroom for its hotel.
  - The committee decides.
  - The family holds an annual reunion.
  - My family have never been able to agree.
12. Separated Subjects are often called parenthetical expressions and include *along with*, *as well as*, *together with*, *accompanied by*, and *in addition to*. These expressions should be disregarded; they do not change the number of the subject from singular to plural. If the subject is singular, the verb is too.
  - Elaine as well as her sister belongs to the Girl Scouts.

## Subject-Verb Agreement

Review: Subject-verb agreement requires the correct ending on the verb to match the singular or plural subject. Agreement is an issue only in the present tense, since all verbs in other tenses are exactly the same for singular or plural subjects (except *was* and *were*).

### The Rule:

If a noun ends in *s*, it is plural, usually.

If a verb ends in *s*, it is singular.

Example: John (do, does) his work.  
*John* is singular, so you need a singular verb. *Does* is singular because it ends in *s*.

Directions: Underline the subject in each of the following sentences and then circle the verb in parentheses that correctly completes the sentence.

1. Each of the math problems (take, takes) twenty minutes to solve.
2. Some of the spectators (are, is) already leaving the stadium.
3. Neither of your arguments (are, is) very convincing.
4. All of the time-outs (has, have) been used.
5. No one on the highways (is, are) exempt from the traffic rules.
6. Several of the group (have, has) taken the trip before.
7. Anyone with glasses (need, needs) to wear them for the driving exam.
8. None of the car breakdowns (were, was) reported in the newspaper.
9. The shears (were, was) left outside in the rain.
10. Ms. Burns, as well as Dr. Carroll, (teach, teaches) home economics.
11. Neither of the girls (has, have) seen the movie.
12. Any one of the three car routes (is, are) better than the one that goes through town.
13. Both of the boys in the family (has, have) red hair.
14. Either of those answers (is, are) correct.
15. The family (plan, plans) to go swimming.
16. Some fans in the grandstand (were, was) shouting at the umpire.
17. Three dollars (is, are) a lot of money for that magazine.
18. All of the trouble between the settlers and the natives who lived there (were, was) the result of a misunderstanding.
19. Few of the airlines (offer, offers) direct service between those cities.



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## Subject-Verb Agreement

Directions: Choose the right word from the two given in parentheses.

1. One of the most dangerous kinds of mushrooms (are, is) the death angel.
2. The glass in these doors (have, has) been treated to prevent sweating.
3. Films of our team in action (is, are) shown after every game.
4. A schedule of arrivals and departures (are, is) posted on the wall.
5. His arrogance, as well as his ignorance, (annoy, annoys) them.
6. Many of the ship's passengers (was, were) seasick.
7. One of Grant Wood's best-known paintings (are, is) "American Gothic."
8. (Do, Does) either of you have change for a dollar?
9. Nobody in the House or Senate (dare, dares) oppose the bill.
10. Several of the fuses (have, has) blown.
11. Either my brothers or my sister (are, is) going with me.
12. Neither the quarterback nor the two tackles (was, were) eligible.
13. (Have, Has) either the doctor or his assistant made an appointment for you?
14. Which (is, are) more beautiful, spring flowers or autumn flowers?
15. In the basement (is, are) a power saw and an electric drill.
16. The main unfinished business (is, are) the disarmament negotiations.
17. (Here's, Here are) some economic forecasts that point to a bright future.
18. Posted on every bulletin board (is, are) a copy of the rules.
19. Politics (are, is) not for those who cannot stand ridicule.
20. You are the only one of the members who (has, have) failed to vote.
21. This is the longest of the selections that (is, are) to be played.
22. This is one of the European cars that (has, have) automatic transmission.
23. The rose is one of the flowers which (requires, require) great care.
24. The bluejay is one species which (visits, visit) the feeder frequently.

25. The spruce is one of the evergreens which (grow, grows) abundantly in New England.
26. Of all the sports that (develops, develop) strong bodies, swimming is the best.

### **Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent**

The antecedent of a pronoun is the word to which the pronoun refers. In the sentence "*Marcie washed her hair*," *Marcie* is the antecedent of the pronoun *her*. A pronoun always agrees with its antecedent in both number and gender. Thus in the sentence above, *her*, like *Marcie*, is both singular and feminine. A plural pronoun is used when the antecedent is plural: "*The singers finished their performance*." In regard to pronoun gender, the pronoun is masculine (*he, his, him*) when the antecedent is masculine, feminine when the antecedent is feminine (*she, her, hers*), and neuter (*it, its*) when the antecedent is neither masculine nor feminine (*box, car, house*). If you need some review of pronoun gender before going into the exercises for this module element on pronoun antecedent agreement, turn back to the pronoun chart on page sixteen for a brief review before continuing. Study these examples of pronouns agreeing with their antecedents:

The student disliked his English class. (*His* is the masculine, singular form of the third person pronoun which agrees with the singular noun *student*.)

The girls learned that their term projects were satisfactory. (*Their* is the plural possessive form of the third person pronoun which agrees with the plural noun *girls*.)

Janice expressed her opinion on the new styles. (*Her* is the feminine possessive form of the third person singular pronoun which agrees with the noun *Janice*.)

The committee members will present their report next week. (*Their* is the plural possessive form of the third person pronoun which agrees with the plural noun *committee members*.)

### **Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent** **Exercise 1**

Underline the correct form of the pronoun. Do not be misled by nouns or pronouns intervening between the pronoun and its antecedent.

1. Jim and John declared that (he, they) were too tired to play.
2. Neither Mary nor Patricia was willing to admit that (she, they) was defeated.
3. Every man knows that (his, their) sex is credited with the first murder.
4. The organization functioned until (its, their) charter expired.
5. Is a man basically violent in (their, his) dealings with other men?
6. Is a woman basically dangerous in (her, their) ability to seduce a man to sin?
7. When woman defines man as necessarily violent, (she, they) defines herself.
8. A characteristic of many women in mythology is (her, their) inability to communicate (her, their) understanding of the needs of men.
9. Unfortunately, men also seldom understand the needs of (his, their) womenfolk.

## Pronoun Case

Pronoun case is really a very simple matter. There are three cases.

1. Subjective case: pronouns used as subject.
2. Objective case: pronouns used as object of verbs or prepositions.
3. Possessive case: pronouns which express ownership.

Subjects	Objects	Possession
I	me	my (mine)
you	you	your (yours)
he	him	his
she	her	her (hers)
it	it	its
we	us	our (ours)
they	them	their (theirs)
who	whom	whose

The pronouns *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, and *which* do not change form.

Some problems of case:

1. In compound structures, where there are two pronouns or a noun and a pronoun, drop the other noun for a moment. Then you can see which case you want.  
Not: Bob and me travel a good deal. (Would you say, "me travel"?)  
Not: We gave the flowers to Jane and I. (Would you say "He gave the flowers to I"?)  
Not: Us men like the coach. (Would you say "Us like the coach"?)
2. In comparison; comparisons usually follow *than* or *as*:  
He is taller than I (am tall).  
This helps you as much as (it helps) me.  
She is as noisy as I (am).

Comparisons are really shorthand sentences which usually omit words, such as those in the parentheses in the sentences above. If you complete the comparison in your head, you can choose the correct case for the pronoun.

Not: He is taller than me. (Would you say "than me am tall"?)

3. In formal and semi-formal writing--  
--use the objective form after a form of the verb *to be*.  
Formal: It is I  
Informal: It is me.  
--use *whom* in the objective case.  
Formal: To whom am I talking?  
Informal: Who am I talking to?

### Parallel Structure

**Express similar ideas in similar grammatical form.**

Not parallel: Jane is tall, blonde, and with blue eyes.

Parallel: Jane is tall, blonde, and blue-eyed.

Use similar grammatical form for:

1. Items in a series

Not parallel: In spincasting, your stance, how you hold the rod, and the way in which you swing may affect distance and accuracy.

Parallel: In spincasting, your stance, your manner of holding the rod, and your swing may affect distance and accuracy.

Not parallel: He asked me to return his bike and that I should lock it up.

Parallel: He asked me to return his bike and to lock it up.

or

He asked that I return his bike and that I lock it up.

2. Items to be compared

Not parallel: I like tennis better than to play indoor games.

Parallel: I like tennis better than indoor games.

3. Sentence parts separated by double conjunctions

either...or

neither...nor

both...and not

only...but also

not...nor

Not parallel: I like either football or taking part in track events.

Parallel: I like either football or track events.

	and	
	but	
	or	
	for	
	nor	
	yet	
noun		noun
verb		verb
prep. phrase		prep. phrase

Items in a sentence joined by a coordinating conjunction should always belong to the same grammatical category.

Unbalanced: I find it easier to study in the morning and goofing off in the evening.

I find it easier "to verb" and "verb + ing."

Balanced: I find it easier to study in the morning and to goof off in the evening.

I find it easier "to verb" and "to verb."

Exercise: Create as many different sentences as you can using the following grammatical patterns:

1. Example: He told us to attend class every day and to study hard.

Pattern: He told us "to \_\_\_" and "to \_\_\_."

Example: He told us to work very hard and to write home for money twice a week.

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2. Example: Professor Lecterne told us that C.S. Lewis was a great writer and that we should read his books carefully.

Pattern: "Noun" told us (that + sentence) and (that + sentence).

Example: My mother told us that we had to take our baths and that we had to go to bed.

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3. Example: *Stereo Review* suggests washing your records in warm water and lending them to no one but close friends.

Pattern: "Noun" suggests "\_\_\_ ing" and "\_\_\_ ing."

Example: I suggest closing your term paper and turning it in immediately.

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4. Example: Mavis is studying either in her room or in the library.

Pattern: "Noun" is "\_\_\_ ing" either (prep. phrase) or (prep. phrase).

Example: John is working either on this term paper or on his final speech.

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### Parallel Construction Test A

Most-- but not all-- of these sentences lack parallel construction. Cross out any part that is not parallel and write the correction above.

1. I've done the exercise, passed the test, and all my papers written.
2. The officer said I was speeding, had no tail lights, and in the wrong lane.
3. Walking quietly, looking intently, and never giving up, we finally found the child.
4. I like drinking cokes and pizza.
5. I like his casual manner, his concern for me, and he can be depended on.
6. She's planning to be a photographer, a model, or go into commercial art.
7. Leave space at the top of the page, have even margins, and use double spacing.

### Parallel Construction Test B

Most-- but not all-- of these sentences lack parallel construction. Cross out any part that is not parallel and write the correction above.

1. My father speaks with authority, honesty, and with kindness.
2. She was waiting for a tall, dark, handsome man.
3. The one who came was short, blond, and he was rather plain.
4. I wrote my paper, checked the spelling, and then I always read it aloud.
5. She's interested in basketball, tennis, and entering track meets.
6. Slowly, quietly, and with care, the bird watchers moved forward.
7. The lecture was interesting, had lots of humor, and informative.

### Misplaced Modifiers

When a modifier is separated from the word it modifies or when its placement blurs relationships, the result is confusion for the reader.

Misplaced: In agony over his tragic life, the pins from his wife and mother's dress became weapons for Oedipus to gouge out his eyes.

Because the introductory phrase precedes *pins*, the sentence seems to say that inanimate pins were in agony.

Revised: In agony over his tragic life, Oedipus uses the pins from his wife and mother's dress to gouge out his eyes.

## Words

Avoid misplacing words by placing most modifiers directly before or after the words they modify and by placing certain modifiers (such as *almost*, *only*, *even*, *hardly*, *nearly*, and *just*) directly before the words they modify.

Misplaced: Innocent and uncomprehending, Othello strangles Desdemona.

Revised: Othello strangles innocent and uncomprehending Desdemona.

Avoid squinting modifiers, words placed so that they may modify either the word directly before or the word directly following.

Squinting: The role of Camille that everyone thought would suit Yvonne completely disgusted her. (Is she suited completely or completely disgusted?)

Revised: The role of Camille that everyone thought would completely suit Yvonne disgusted her.

Revised: The role of Camille that everyone thought would suit Yvonne disgusted her completely.

## Phrases

Avoid misplacing phrases by placing verbal phrases near the words they modify and most prepositional phrases immediately following the words they modify.

Misplaced: Tamburlaine rides in triumph through Persepolis, exalting in his power.

Revised: Exalting in his power, Tamburlaine rides in triumph through Persepolis.

Misplaced: *Everyman* is a medieval morality play that dramatizes every person's death and impending judgment with allegorical characters.

Revised: *Everyman* is a medieval morality play with allegorical characters; it dramatizes every person's death and impending judgment. (Notice that without the change to a compound sentence in the revision, the final clause might be misconstrued to mean that characters judge.)

Note: Some adverbial prepositional phrases can appear in different positions.

For a long time Hamlet plots his revenge. Hamlet plots his revenge for a long time. But to avoid ambiguity: Hamlet plans to revenge his father's death in his mind. (Did the death take place in Hamlet's mind?)

## Subordinating Clauses

Avoid ambiguity by placing subordinate clauses near the words they modify.

Misplaced: *Agamemnom* is the first play in the *Oresteia*, a dramatic trilogy which depicts the tragic homecoming of a king. (Only *Agamemnon* depicts the homecoming.)

Revised: *Agamemnon*, which depicts the tragic homecoming of a king, is the first play in the *Oresteia*, a dramatic trilogy.

## Intrusive Modifiers

Avoid inserting modifiers intrusively between the parts of a verb phrase or between the parts of an infinitive.

Awkward: Hamlet will, if he ever decides to act, revenge his father's death.

Revised: If he ever decides to act, Hamlet will revenge his father's death.

Awkward: To fully avenge his father's death, Orestes must kill Clytemnestra, his mother.  
Revised: To avenge his father's death fully, Orestes must kill Clytemnestra, his mother.

### **Dangling Modifiers**

When the word modified is missing from the sentence, the modifier is left dangling.

Selling his soul to the devil, his life becomes a series of triumphs and pleasures. (Who sold his soul?)

To correct the dangling modifier, you may do one of two things.

1. Change the subject of the main clause.  
Selling his soul to the devil, Faustus enjoys his life of triumphs and pleasures.
2. Expand the dangling phrase to a subordinate clause.  
After Faustus sells his soul to the devil, his life becomes a series of triumphs and pleasures.

### **Verbal Phrases**

A participial or infinitive phrase dangles when the word it modifies is implied rather than directly stated in the sentence.

Dangling: Surfeited with life's pleasures, the consequences for eternity are forgotten. (Who is surfeited?)

Revised: Surfeited with life's pleasures, Faustus forgets the consequences for eternity.

Dangling: Power and pleasure seemed to carry Faustus's mind away from reality to forget about a future in hell. (Who forgot?)

Revised: Power and pleasure seemed to carry Faustus's mind away from reality so that he forgot about a future in hell.

### **Prepositional Phrases**

Prepositional phrases, which may serve as either adjectives or adverbs, dangle when there is no word in the sentence that they can reasonably modify.

Dangling: With hundreds of lines to memorize, the role of Faustus is overwhelming. (Who must memorize the lines? The role cannot.)

Revised: With hundreds of lines to memorize, Franklin was overwhelmed by the role of Faustus.

Revised: Because there are hundreds of lines to memorize, the role of Faustus is overwhelming.

### **Elliptical Clauses**

Elliptical clauses (clauses from which words have been omitted and must be inferred from the context) also dangle if the sentence lacks the word modified.

Dangling: While on stage, no itch, ache, or desire to sneeze can be given in to. (Are the itch, ache, or desire on stage?)

Revised: While on stage, the actor cannot give in to the desire to sneeze, scratch an itch, or soothe an ache.



### **Dangling Modifiers- Exercise 1**

Rewrite the following sentences, ridding them of any dangling modifiers.

1. Not having studied the textbook, my experiment was a failure.
2. By rereading chapters one and two, the rest of the book was easy to understand.
3. By pulling the curtains, the room was darkened.
4. Being in questionable taste, many teachers are hesitant to teach Catcher In the Rye.
5. To avoid public censure, Catcher in the Rye is not taught in public classrooms.
6. As a horror movie, we were all disappointed in The Exorcist.
7. To be a well-informed citizen, The Lafayette Journal Courier should be read daily.
8. By leaving out most of the spices, the meatloaf tasted even better.
9. While proofreading the essay, four dangling modifiers were found.
10. To maintain a good relationship with your neighbors, your stereo must be turned down.

### **Shifts**

Tense, voice, mood, person, and number are like ground rules. They may change from game to game or from writing task or writing task, but once laid down for a specific situation, they should be followed consistently. Shifting from one set of rules to another after the game or sentence or paragraph has begun confuses the participants-- that is, the players and spectators or the writers and readers. Take, for instance, the following paragraph:

To play the game of parcheesi, you need two or more players, a game board, dice, and four markers for each player. First, roll the dice. The player with the highest number starts the play. They placed their markers on the starting place on the board. Then roll the dice again and they will advance their markers the number of spaces indicated on the dice. When the markers have reached home, the game has been won.

The shifts in tense, voice, mood, person, and number make this paragraph difficult to follow. Who rolls the dice- the implied *you* of sentence 2, rolling perhaps for all players, or the individual player of sentence 3? Do all players advance all their markers for every roll of the dice, as sentence 5 suggests? If so, what is the point of the game, since all will reach home together? Rewriting the paragraph to eliminate shifts clarifies its meaning.

Playing the game of parcessi requires two or more players, a game board, dice, and four markers for each player. First, each player rolls the dice. The player with the highest number starts the play. She places her markers on the starting place on the board. Then she rolls the dice again and advances a marker the number of spaces indicated on the dice. The player whose markers reach home first wins the game.

## 1. Tense

Avoid tense shifts that do not follow a logical sequence.

Confused: The Monopoly player plans to buy Park Place but went instead "directly to jail" without "passing GO." (shifts from present to past tense)

Revised: The Monopoly player had planned to buy Park Place but went instead "directly to jail" without "passing GO."

Revised: The Monopoly player plans to buy Park Place but goes instead "directly to jail" without "passing GO."

## 2. Voice

Avoid shifts in voice when they confuse, mislead, or sound awkward.

Confused: Soon after the chess game began, my rook was captured by my opponent. (shifts from active to passive voice.)

Revised: Soon after the chess game began, my opponent captured my rook.

## 3. Mood

Avoid a shift in mood if it sounds awkward or confuses the reader.

Confused: Open by moving Pawn to rank four, then you should follow with Queen's Bishop to rank three. (shift from imperative to indicative mood.)

Revised: Open by moving Pawn to rank four; then follow with Queen's Bishop to rank three.

## 4. Person and Number

Person is a characteristic of pronouns and verbs that indicates the speaker's or speaker's position relative to the pattern of communication. First person (*I am, we are*) indicates the person or persons speaking; second person (*you are, we are*), those spoken to; and third person (*he, she, it is* and *they are*), those spoken about.

*I* (first person) am talking to *you* (second person) about *him* (third person).

Number is a characteristic of nouns, pronouns, demonstrative adjectives, and verbs. The number of game, *she, this*, and *seems* is singular, indicating one. The number of games, *they, these*, and *seem* is plural, indicating more than one.

Faulty shifts in person or number are confusing. One common error is shifting from first or third person to second person.

Confused: I enjoy playing Monopoly, but you can never tell how long a game will take. (shift from first to second person.)

Revised: I enjoy playing Monopoly, but I can never tell how long a game will take.

To avoid referring to an indefinite pronoun or noun with a sexist *his* or an awkward *his* or *her*, some writers will shift from third person singular to third person plural. A better solution is to revise the antecedent.

Confused: Everyone who plays strip poker risks embarrassing themselves.

Revised: All of those who play strip poker risk embarrassing themselves.

## 5. Direct to Indirect Discourse

Direct quotations, the exact words of the speakers enclosed in quotation marks, constitute direct discourse: He said "Let's play." Paraphrases-- telling "what," "that," or "how" and questioning "if" or "why" without using the exact words of the speaker-- constitutes indirect discourse: He said that we should play. Shifts from one kind of discourse to another are unnecessary when they confuse or result in awkward shifts in tense.

Mixed: In *Underhanded Chess*, Jerry Sohl advises, "Always lose to a kung fu expert: and that is often sporting to allow a sick friend to win."

Revised: In *Underhanded Chess* Jerry Sohl advises, "Always lose to a kung fu expert or to a sick friend." (revised so that both quotations are direct)

Revised: In *Underhanded Chess*, Jerry Sohl advises that the prudent player always loses to a kung fu expert and a compassionate player to a sick friend. (revised so that both quotations are indirect)

### Shifts

Directions: Indicate the shift in the following sentences.

Mark A if the shift is in person or number.

Mark B if the shift is in tense.

Mark C if the shift is in voice.

1. When you have good health, one should feel fortunate.
2. Most children remember the time they learned there is no Santa Claus because that was a day when you felt grown-up.
3. Each student is required to take ten minor competencies if they are to pass the course.
4. My friend called to invite me to visit and also catches me up on the news in Midland.
5. Everyone must have eaten a lot; even the cake with purple icing was gone.
6. Volunteers made the dangerous journey after dark, but no wolves were encountered.
7. Since he knew that ability to speak well before a group is important to success, a course in public speaking was taken by him.
8. At this point the President reads a prepared statement but refused to answer any questions.
9. She made some flippant remarks and rushes off down the hall.
10. A man should build his house to suit himself, and then you will be happy with it.

## Commas Mark Pauses

The comma is a valuable, useful tool in a sentence. When we use it correctly, we help the reader see the necessary separations between ideas within the sentence. When we misuse the commas, we are chopping ideas into wrong pieces or confusing the reader with unnecessary pauses.

1. Use commas to separate independent clauses when they are joined by: *and, but, for, or, nor*.

The game was over, but the crowd refused to leave.

2. Use commas to separate words, phrases, and clauses written in a series of three or more coordinate elements.

A trio of Marie, Ellen, and Frances sang at the entertainment.

Jack walked into my office, took off his hat, and sat down.

Do not separate two verbs which follow the same subject.

John ran out of the house and leaped into his car.

3. Use commas to separate two or more coordinate adjectives that describe or modify the same noun. (Coordinate adjectives can be interchanged.)

The noisy, enthusiastic group applauded the speech.

(The group is noisy and enthusiastic or enthusiastic and noisy.)

But: The new tennis court will soon be open.

(The court is not new and tennis.)

4. Use commas in the beginning of the sentence after an introductory clause or phrase which has a verb or verb form.

Hearing his owner call him, the dog ran forward.

While I was reading, the cat scratched at the door.

To get a seat, I had to arrive by 7:30 p.m.

My schedule having been arranged, I went home for the week-end.

5. Use commas at the beginning of the sentence to set off exclamations or comments such as "yes," "no," "well," "oh," etc.

Yes, I'll think about it.

6. Use commas in the middle of the sentence to set off phrases and clauses which are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use these commas in pairs, one before the phrase or clause to indicate the beginning of the pause and one at the end to indicate the end of the pause.

Sara Clark, who lives in my dorm, is in my chemistry class.

Comma #1 at the beginning. Comma #2 at the end.

But, commas are not used in this "who" clause because it is a necessary part of the sentence.

The girl who is sitting at the table next to you is in my chemistry class.

Use a pair of commas in a similar manner:

- to set off nonessential appositives (phrases which identify a noun).  
Tom, the captain of the team, was injured in the game.  
The person injured in the game was Tom, the captain of the team.
- to set off words or names used in direct address.  
It is up to you, Jane, to finish the assignment.
- to set off nonessential comments which interrupt the sentence.  
I was, however, too tired to make the trip.

7. Use commas near the end of the sentence to separate sharply contrasted coordinate elements in the sentence.  
He was merely ignorant, not stupid.
8. Use commas to set off all geographical names, items in dates (except the month a day), addresses (except the street name and number), and titles in names.  
Birmingham, Alabama, gets its name from Birmingham, England.  
July 22, 1967, was a momentous day in his life.  
Who lives at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C.?  
Donald B. Lake, M.D., will be the principal speaker.
9. Use commas after "he said," etc. to set off direct quotations.  
John said, "I'll see you tomorrow."  
"I was able," she answered, "to complete the assignment this morning."
10. Use commas to prevent possible confusion or misreading.  
To John, Harrison had been a sort of idol.  
Above, the mountains rose like purple shadows.

### **Punctuation- Commas**

Some of the following sentences need commas. Put in the commas where they are needed, and leave the sentence alone or no punctuation is needed.

1. The girl with the bright friendly smile wore a bright green scarf to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.
2. As he read the Chekhov story he became aware of the Russian's genius.
3. Dauphin Island located off the coast of Alabama is a favorite spot for fishermen.
4. She was as a matter of fact mainly interested in showing off her vocabulary.
5. I often go to the seashore and collect rocks there.
6. Before reaching the summit the climbers were forced by a storm to turn back.
7. Did you know that James Agee the novelist and poet was also a film critic?
8. Lady Jane Grey was the queen of England from July 10 1553 to July 19 1553.
9. Joseph registered for English 101 History 204 and Biology 106.
10. After discussing "Rain" we agreed that Somerset Maugham could really tell a good story.

## The Apostrophe

Possessive nouns always take apostrophes.

singular = 's

Mary's hat  
boy's book  
secretary's typewriter  
Charles's aunt

plurals which use an "s" = '

boys' games  
Smiths' house  
secretaries' typewriter

plurals which don't need an s = 's

men's meeting  
mice's tails  
children's story

Possessive pronouns (such as *my, your, their, her, its, yours, theirs, ours, hers, his, etc.*) never take apostrophes.

His car is outside.

That dog is theirs.

The cat hurt its paw.

Contractions always take apostrophes.

it is = it's

he does not = he doesn't

let us go = let's go

she is going = she's going

1983 = '83

For clarity, plurals of letters of the alphabet, abbreviations, and numbers also take apostrophes.

four 7's

six A's

## The Apostrophe

Punctuate the following sentences with apostrophes according to the rules you have learned for the use of the apostrophe.

1. Whos the partys candidate for the vice president this year?
2. The fox had its right foreleg caught securely in the traps jaws.
3. Our neighbors car is an old Chrysler, and its just about to fall apart.
4. In three weeks time well have to begin school again.
5. Whenever I think of the stories I read as a child, I remember Cinderellas glass slipper and Snow Whites wicked stepmother.
6. We claimed the picnic table was ours, but the Smiths children looked so disappointed that we found another spot.

7. Its important that the kitten learn to find its way home.
8. She did not hear her childrens cries.
9. My address has three 7s, and Tims phone number has four 2s.
10. Its such a beautiful day that Ive decided to take a sunbath.
11. She said the watch Jack found was hers, but she couldn't identify the manufacturers name on it.
12. Ladies wear and little girls clothing is on the first floor, and the mens department is on the second.
13. The dogs bark was far worse than its bite.
14. The moons rays shone feebly on the path, and I heard the insects chirpings and whistlings.
15. Theyre not afraid to go ahead with the plans, though the choice is not theirs.

### Quotation Marks

1. Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations (the actual words of a speaker), but do not use them to enclose indirect quotations or summaries of what was said.
 

He said, "You are old enough to know better."  
He said that I was old enough to know better.
2. If the direct quotation is interrupted by expressions such as "he said," or "he stated," use the quotation marks to enclose only the quoted words.
 

"We may find," he said, "that population control is not the answer."
3. Place the comma and the period inside the quotation marks, and the semicolon outside. Put the exclamation mark and the question mark inside the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material, but put them outside when they apply to the whole sentence.
 

"Of course," he replied, "I remember you."  
The witness said, "I swear to the truth of my statement."; however, the jury remained unconvinced.  
He asked, "Where are you going?"  
Did she really say, "I accept your invitation"?
4. If you are quoting two or more sentences together, use only one set of quotation marks to enclose all the sentences.
 

Mary shouted, "Wait for me. I'll be ready in two minutes."
5. Use quotation marks to enclose parts of longer works (such as chapter titles, articles, essays, etc.) and titles of short works (such as short stories, short poems, one-act plays, songs, speeches, etc.) Underline (to indicate italics) long, separate works such as book titles, magazines, newspapers, movies, and plays. Names of ships, airplanes, and trains are also underlined.
 

Benet's story, "The Devil and Daniel Webster" was first published in the Saturday Evening Post.  
"Every Monday" was a favorite song of hers.
6. Use quotation marks to identify words which are being discussed as words.
 

His favorite expressions were "you know" and "like."
7. Use single quotes to indicate a quotation within a quotation.
 

Alice explained, "Mary said to me, 'Be careful,' but I forgot."

## Direct Quotations

Quotation marks always set off the exact words of a speaker. Periods and commas are usually placed inside the quotation marks. Question and exclamation marks are placed inside the quotation marks if they pertain to the quotation.

Place quotation marks and correct punctuation in the following sentences. Underline the quotation.

1. I'll see you in Room 4222 after school said Mrs. Thomas
2. Carolyn and Barbara answered together Present
3. Ruth inquired What is the temperature today
4. Time to rise and shine called Mother
5. Mr. Brandt asked Who is responsible for this

Capitalize and punctuate the following sentences.

1. Full speed ahead bellowed the skipper and ram that boat
2. All the evidence points to your guilt insisted the prosecutor
3. I can see said Dr. Richmond that you have a fever
4. Sergeant Bowers said at ease men
5. Take a vote shouted the crowd

## Using Question Marks

A question mark, used to end sentences or phrases that ask direct questions, is also primarily end punctuation, but it may be used within a sentence to indicate doubt about the accuracy of dates or numbers.

Marking the end of a direct question

Use the question mark to end a direct question. A direct question repeats the exact words of the speaker in the order in which he or she spoke them and often begins with an interrogative word such as who, what, why, or when or with a verb.

What is the difference between a bit and a byte? (question beginning with an interrogative word)

Should we buy a mainframe, a minicomputer, or a microcomputer? (question beginning with a verb)

When a sentence contains a direct question in quotations, parentheses, or dashes, the question mark will directly follow the exact words of the question.

"Is your company's computer user-friendly?" the buyer asked. (declarative sentence opening with a question)

The buyer asked, "Is your company's computer user-friendly?" (declarative sentence closing with a question)

But

Did the salesman state "The Apple IIc is user friendly"? (question containing declarative sentence)

Someone-- an anxious student?-- is accessing midterm grades on the registrar's computer. In a very short time (one or two nanoseconds?) the mainframe can make a decision.



Place question marks and exclamation points inside or outside final quotation marks, depending upon the meaning of the sentence.

When the quotation itself is an exclamation or a question, put the exclamation point or question mark inside the quotation marks.

"Seven at a blow!" exclaimed the tailor.

"Did I kill seven at a blow?" asked the tailor.

When the sentence of which the quotation is a part rather than the quotation itself is an exclamation or question, put the exclamation point or question mark inside the quotation marks.

Did he say "seven at a blow"?

He did say "seven at a blow"!

Place semicolons and colons outside final quotation marks.

Cinderella told her father that she loved him "like salt"; yet she meant that without him life would be "like food without salt": flavorless.

Use a colon instead of a comma after the introductory tag to a long or formal quotation.

The King sent forth a proclamation: "He who slays the dragon and saves the kingdom will win the hand of my daughter, the peerless Princess Alena, as his bride."

## Capital Letters

Capital letters are used for the following

1. First word of every sentence.
2. First word of each line of poetry.
3. First and last words and all important words in the titles of books, poems, stories, and songs.
4. First word of a direct quotation.
5. First word in the complimentary close of a letter.
6. Important words in the salutation of a letter.
7. Initials.
8. Names of persons.
9. Names of towns, cities, ships, states, countries, languages, and nationalities.
10. Names of streets and avenues.
11. Names of rivers, oceans, seas, lakes, and mountains.
12. Names of schools, special buildings, and firms.
13. Names of the days of the week, the months of the year, and special days.
14. Names of churches and religious denominations.
15. Names of the points of the compass when they refer to a section of the country.
16. I and O when used as words.
17. Titles of people.
18. Sacred names and all words that stand for sacred names.
19. Many abbreviations.

## Capitalization Practice

Draw a line through any letters that should be capitalized and write the appropriate capitalization above the deletion.

1. mr. jones is staying at the ritz carlton hotel in chicago, illinois.
2. dear friends and colleagues,
3. a tale of two cities is my favorite novel by charles dickens.
4. i have to take american history, english, spanish, biology, and algebra.
5. the current president of our club is sandy smith.
6. jane smith is the principal of our high school.
7. my aunt betty's address is 645 main street in denver, colorado.
8. professor adams is teaching biology 1013, chemistry 2003, and anatomy 1007.
9. dr. smith was granted his ph.d. from harvard university several years ago.
10. john and mary both attend nimitz high school in the aldine school district.