

Skill Guide 1: Verb Forms

Agreement of Subject and Verb

- PROBLEM:** The students was taking a test. (incorrect)
Each of the contestants were anxiously waiting. (incorrect)
- PRINCIPLE:** A subject and its verb agree when they are in the same number: A singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb.
- EXAMPLES:** Jose was taking a test. (Singular subject **Jose** requires a singular verb **was taking**.)
The students were taking a test. (Plural subject, plural verb)
- Note 1:** These singular words usually act as subjects and take singular verbs: **each, every, either, neither, one, someone, anyone, no one, everybody, somebody, anybody, nobody, everything**.
- EXAMPLES:** Each was taking the test. Each of the boys was taking the test. Everything is acceptable. Someone is late.
- Note 2:** The subject of a sentence may be more than one word. For example, the title of a book, country, or organization may contain plural words, but it is considered to be singular.
A subject with two or more parts connected by **and** requires a plural verb, unless the words are considered as a single item such as "bacon and eggs."
Words connected by **or, nor, either . . . or, neither . . . nor** are usually considered to be singular.
- EXAMPLES:** *Sons and Lovers* is an English novel. (title, singular)
Maria and I are students at West School. (and, plural)
Neither Fred nor Bob is the person to see about those difficulties. (nor, singular)
Bacon and eggs is my favorite breakfast. (and considered a single item, singular)
- Note 3:** Some verbs come before their subjects.
- EXAMPLE:** There are many answers to your question. (subject: answers, plural)
- Note 4:** The verbs **don't** and **doesn't** require special care: I don't, you don't, he doesn't, she doesn't, we don't, they don't.
- EXAMPLES:** I don't like this weather. You don't either. He doesn't like the weather. It doesn't agree with him. They don't want to live here.
- Note 5:** The name of a group, such as **team** or **jury** can be either singular or plural. If the group is acting as a unit, it is singular; if it is acting as individuals, it is plural.
- EXAMPLES:** The Ohio State football team is not going to the game. (unit, singular)
The football team are arguing in the locker room. (individuals, plural)
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Skill Guide 2: Run-On Sentences

Revising Run-On Sentences

PROBLEM: Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize, he won it for *The Old Man and the Sea*. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Run-on sentences occur when two or more separate sentences are joined (often by a comma) in such a way that the reader must decide where one completed sentence ends and the other begins.

REVISION: Revising a run-on sentence will make the meaning of the sentence clear.

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize. He won it for *The Old Man and the Sea*.

METHODS OF REVISION:

Method 1 Use a period to separate the two sentences, especially if the sentences are closely related.

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize. He won it for *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Method 2 Add a coordinating conjunction such as **and**, **or**, **so**, **but**, **yet**. Use a comma before the coordinating conjunction. The word groups on each side of the comma and the coordinating conjunction must be complete thoughts.

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize, and he won it for *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Method 3 Separate the two sentences by a semicolon if they are closely related. (See SG16.)

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize; he won it for *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Method 4 Rewrite the sentences completely.

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Skill Guide 3: Sentence Fragments

Revising Sentence Fragments

PROBLEM: Ernest Hemingway was admired. Because he was an unusual person and an excellent writer. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: In writing, the clearest way to communicate is to use complete sentences. A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not form a sentence. Some sentence fragments are written for purposes of style and are therefore intentional. Our concern is with those that are not intentional. These sentence fragments must be revised.

REVISION: Since a fragment often has no subject or verb or does not make sense by itself, it does not complete a thought. To correct a fragment, attach the fragment to a complete sentence.

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway was admired because he was an unusual person and an excellent writer.

COMMON REVISIONS:

Sentence and Fragment: I saw him running. In spite of the fact that he had a sore leg.

Revision: I saw him running, in spite of the fact that he had a sore leg.

Sentence and Fragment: I questioned him. Especially about the cause of the accident.
Revision: I questioned him, especially about the cause of the accident.

Sentence and Fragment: She excused him. Although he was late.
Revision: She excused him, although he was late.

Sentence and Fragment: I saw him carrying a package. A big one with red wrapping paper.
Revision: I saw him carrying a package, a big one with red wrapping paper.

Sentence and Fragment: I hear we have a new football coach. Which is good news.
Revision: I hear we have a new football coach, which is good news.

Sentence and Fragment: If our quarterback had not broken his leg. We would have had a good season.
Revision: If our quarterback had not broken his leg, we would have had a good season.

Sentence and Fragment: Our country has many famous musicians. Such as Pearl Bailey and Bing Crosby.
Revision: Our country has many famous musicians such as Pearl Bailey and Bing Crosby.

Skill Guide 4: Punctuation

Apostrophe Use

PROBLEM: Bills' coat didn't look like your's. (incorrect use of apostrophes)

PRINCIPLE: Use an apostrophe for the following constructions: to form the possessive of nouns and indefinite pronouns, to indicate the omission of letters in contractions, and to form the plural of uncapitalized letters of the alphabet.

Note 1: Possessives

To form the possessive of a noun or indefinite pronoun not ending in *s*, add 's.

EXAMPLES: women's hats, boy's gloves, everyone's name, children's movies, a day's work, a month's notice

To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in *s*, just add the apostrophe.

EXAMPLES: the Smiths' house, the ten countries' leaders, two months' time

To form the possessive of a singular noun ending in *s*, be guided by the pronunciation of the word. If a syllable is added when you pronounce the plural, add 's.

EXAMPLES: Charles' room (or Charles's room), my boss's car, a bus's wheels

To form the possessive of a hyphenated word or a compound business name, add 's to the last word.

EXAMPLES: mother-in-law's car, Procter and Gamble's radio advertising

Note 2: Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of a noun.

EXAMPLE: The term paper's are due tomorrow. (incorrect)

Note 3: Do not use an apostrophe to make personal pronouns possessive.

EXAMPLES: The book is hers. The car lost its wheel. The key is theirs. The problem is yours. It was ours.

Note 4: Contractions

Indicate the omission of letters in a contraction by using an apostrophe.

EXAMPLES: didn't (did not), aren't (are not), isn't (is not), it's (it is)

Note 5: To form the plural of uncapitalized letters, use the apostrophe.

EXAMPLE: He had three r's in his last name.

Note 6: To form the plural of numbers such as dates, modern usage does not require an apostrophe.

EXAMPLE: in the 1920s

Skill Guide 5: Verb Forms

Tense

PROBLEM: The policeman seen us when we left the area. (incorrect)
When Jeremiah opened the door, he says, "Let's go."
We knew that he escaped because the cell was empty.

PRINCIPLE: Verb tense indicates time of action. Each verb has different forms which are used in different situations.

Note 1: Use the past participle with a helping verb such as **have, has, had, am, is, are.**

EXAMPLES: The policeman had seen us when we left the area.
The patient was chosen for the experimental operation.
The class has begun, and no one else may enroll.

Note 2: Keep verb tenses consistent. Unless there is a good reason, do not switch from present to past or from past to present.

EXAMPLES: When Jeremiah opened the door, he said, "Let's go."
When Jeremiah opens the door, he sees the baby.
Henrietta planned to leave when the party ended.

Note 3: The past perfect tense (had done, had left, had escaped) indicates which of two actions took place earlier.

EXAMPLES: We knew that he had escaped because the cell was empty.
When we entered the room, the fire started. (Note: The fire started at the same time that we entered the room.)
When we entered the room, the fire had started. (Note: The fire had started before we entered the room.)

Skill Guide 6: Punctuation

Comma Use

PROBLEM: Everyone asked but no one really listened to the answer. (incorrect)
This is however the last time it will be explained. (incorrect)
Many of the actresses lived in Boston Massachusetts. (incorrect)
The children asked for vegetables ice cream and salad. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Commas are used in the following situations: before the coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence; around parenthetical expressions, between a city and a state, and after each item in a series (except the last).

Note 1: Commas in a Compound Sentence

Use a comma before the coordinating conjunction (**and, but, so, or**) in a compound sentence. If the compound sentence is very short, no comma is required. If the sentence is not compound but it does contain a compound verb, no comma is used.

EXAMPLES: The first pages of the novel were slow moving, but the rest was very interesting. (correct)
We tried to find George at the airport but missed him. (no comma because this is a compound verb, not a compound sentence)
We could have gone to the movie, or we could have read the book. (correct)
Everyone in the lobby ate or drank coffee. (no comma, compound verb)
The children were hungry but they did not eat. (no comma because the sentence is so short)

Note 2: Use commas to set off parenthetical expressions such as **however, of course, for example**.

EXAMPLE: Each student was, however, expected to study.

Note 3: Use a comma to separate the name of a city and a state.

EXAMPLE: Chicago, Illinois

Note 4: Use commas to separate items in a series of three or more.

EXAMPLES: The store sold potatoes, carrots, beans, and eggs.
The store sold eggs and potatoes. (no comma, two items)
Bernardo ran, leaped, and pranced for joy.

Skill Guide 7: Capitalization

PROBLEM: The policeman said, "what are you doing?" (incorrect)
I had not heard the story Goldilocks And The Three Bears. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: There are rules to learn concerning capitalization: for titles, direct quotations, common and proper nouns and adjectives, names with titles, sacred names, seasons, directions, and school subjects.

Note 1: **Titles**—Capitalize the first and last words of a title. Capitalize all words of four or more letters in a title. The following words are not capitalized:

Articles: **a, an, the**

Short Conjunctions: **and, as, if, but**

Short Prepositions: **on, off, to**

EXAMPLES: *The Old Man and the Sea*

How to Win Friends and Influence People

A Tale of Two Cities

Note 2: **Direct Quotations**—Capitalize the first word of a complete sentence that is a direct quotation.

EXAMPLE: Jose whispered, "Why can't you answer me?"

Note 3: **Nouns and Adjectives**—Capitalize proper nouns and proper adjectives. Do not capitalize common nouns and adjectives.

EXAMPLES: George Herrato, Canada, New York City, Grinnell College,
Mississippi River, White House (proper nouns)

Chinese art, Italian spaghetti, European cities (proper adjectives)

high school, large river (common nouns and adjectives)

Note 4: **Names With Titles**—Capitalize the title of a person if the title comes before the person's name.

EXAMPLES: President Clinton, General Grant

The general was late. (title without a name)

Note 5: **Sacred Names**—Capitalize references to sacred beings.

EXAMPLES: God, the Lord, the Messiah, Allah

Ask the Lord for His blessing.

Note 6: **Seasons**—Capitalize the names of the seasons of the year only when they are referred to as persons. Usually the seasons are not capitalized.

EXAMPLES: I prefer spring to summer.

In the poem, Spring danced joyfully. (as a person)

Note 7: **Directions**—Capitalize the points of the compass when they name specific regions of the country. Do not capitalize the points of the compass when they show direction.

EXAMPLES: The North suffered greatly after the war. (specific region)

Drive north for an hour and then turn south. (direction)

Note 8: **School Subjects**—Capitalize the names of school subjects only if they are the names of languages or if they are numbered.

EXAMPLES: My courses were French and Home Economics II.

I like to study biology, algebra, and American history.

Skill Guide 8: Homonyms

PROBLEM: The stationary had her name on it. (incorrect)
Their going to leave now. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Although homonyms are two words that sound the same, they have different meanings. It is important to learn those meanings.

Coarse, Course

coarse: rough, crude, vulgar

course: path of action, series of studies, part of a meal, of course

EXAMPLES: He used coarse language. The cloth was coarse.
Of course, I agree. Wine comes with the first course.

Complement, Compliment

complement: something that makes perfect or completes

compliment: to say something in praise of a person

EXAMPLES: Her personality complements her intelligence.
He received many compliments for his science project.

Council, Counsel

council: a group or assembly

counsel: advice, advise

EXAMPLES: The town council meets every Monday.
I want to counsel you to change your attitude!

Principal, Principle

principal: leader of a school; chief

principle: rule, belief, law (noun)

EXAMPLES: Mr. Nelson is the principal of that school. One of the principals in the case has died. He is my principal worry.
He is a man of principle. I have learned the principles of algebra.

Stationary, Stationery

stationary: fixed, standing still

stationery: writing paper or supplies

EXAMPLES: The soldier took a stationary position at the firing line.
Mary received blue stationery for her birthday.

There, Their, They're

there: a place (also an expletive: **There** once was a dog.)

their: a possessive pronoun

they're: a contraction for they are

EXAMPLES: We went there. Do you know their address? They're late.

To, Too, Two

to: preposition (to Boston); part of infinitive (to run)

too: adverb, meaning very, also

two: a number

EXAMPLES: She went to the store to buy ice cream. It was too late. Two people left early too.

Skill Guide 9: Usage

Choosing the Correct Word

PROBLEM: Your house is larger then my house is. (incorrect)
We divided the cake between the three of us. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Usage involves the way words are actually used. The following problems deal with words which are often confused.

Accept, Except

Accept is a verb which means to receive.

Except is a verb meaning to leave out.

Except is also a preposition meaning excluding.

EXAMPLES: I accept your apology.

If you except his disastrous sophomore year, Khoun had an excellent record. He passed everything except French.

Advice, Advise

Advice is a noun meaning opinion.

Advise is a verb meaning to give advice to.

EXAMPLES: Marla would not give advice to Anita.

I advise you to listen to her.

Affect, Effect

Affect is a verb which means to influence.

Effect is a verb which means to bring about.

Effect is also a noun which means influence or result.

EXAMPLES: Her attitude was affected by her injury.

The effect of the gas shortage was slight.

Congress tried to effect changes in the situation.

Between, Among

Between is used when referring to two items.

Among is used when referring to three or more items.

EXAMPLES: Just between you and me, this work is difficult.

We know that we are among friends.

Later, Latter

Later is an adverb referring to time.

Latter is a noun or adjective referring to the second person or thing named.

EXAMPLES: Mr. Fiorello arrived later in the day.

Juan and Jason both won prizes: The former won a prize in bicycling, and the latter won in art.

Than, Then

Than shows comparison.

Then shows time or cause (If . . . then . . .)

EXAMPLES: Alaska is colder than Florida.

We shall go to dinner, then a movie.

Skill Guide 10: Punctuation

Quotation Marks

PROBLEM: Mary said "that she was late". (incorrect)
I enjoyed the book "Hawaii". (incorrect)

PRINCIPLES: Quotation marks should be used for a direct quotation, the exact words of a speaker. Do not use quotation marks for an indirect quotation where the words are not the exact words of the speaker.

EXAMPLES: Mary said, "You will enjoy the trip to the city."
Mary said that we would enjoy the trip to the city.

QUOTATION MARKS FOR DIRECT QUOTATIONS

Note 1: The introductory expression (Mary said) is followed by a comma.

EXAMPLE: Mary said, "Everyone was surprised by the announcement."

Note 2: If a direct quotation is interrupted, use quotation marks to indicate the second part of the quotation. The second part of an interrupted direct quotation does not begin with a capital letter unless it begins a new sentence.

EXAMPLES: "You will be hungry," Maria said, "because it is late."
"You will be hungry," Maria said. "It is very late."

Note 3: Always place periods and commas inside quotation marks. Question marks and exclamation marks may be placed inside or outside quotation marks, depending on the meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: "Are you going to New York City?" asked Roberto.
Did Jefferson say, "I quit"?
He shouted, "Help!"

Note 4: When only a word or phrase is quoted from a source, use quotation marks around only the exact word(s) quoted. Do not change any capitalization.

EXAMPLE: Ernest Hemingway called Paris "a moveable feast."

Note 5: Enclose a quotation within a quotation in single quotation marks.

EXAMPLE: "I remember that she said, 'Turn left,'" said Alex.

QUOTATION MARKS FOR TITLES

Note 1: Use quotation marks around the titles of short works: short stories, poems, chapters, magazine articles, songs, essays.

EXAMPLE: I enjoyed "Trees," a poem about the joys of nature.

Note 2: Italics for the titles of longer published works published separately such as novels, magazines, newspapers, movies, and web sites

Example: The entire class watched *The Wizard of Oz*.

We were reading *The Old Man and the Sea* for class.

Skill Guide 11: Punctuation

Commas With Introductory Elements

PROBLEM: When Eldred left the movie he was excited. (incorrect)
After a trip to the beach Frederick was sunburned. (incorrect)
Giggling wildly the children raced to the house. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Use a comma to set off introductory elements. Often, these elements could be moved elsewhere in the sentence or eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: When Eldred left the movie, he was excited.
After a trip to the beach, Frederick was sunburned.
Giggling wildly, the children raced to the house.

Note 1: Use a comma to set off an introductory clause, a word group that contains a subject and a verb but cannot stand independently as a sentence.

EXAMPLE: After we have saved our money, we will go to Ohio.

Note 2: Use a comma to set off an introductory prepositional phrase. The comma may be omitted if the prepositional phrase is very short and the author does not wish the reader to pause.

EXAMPLES: Before the game against Miami, tickets sales were slow.
After breakfast, we left.
After breakfast we left. (author choice to omit the comma)

Note 3: Use a comma to set off an introductory participial phrase.

EXAMPLE: Arriving at the football game, they discovered that they had forgotten their tickets.

Note 4: Use a comma to set off introductory words such as *yes*, *well*, or *why*.

EXAMPLES: Why, I never knew that he was a football player.
Yes, everyone must sign the document.

Note 5: A comma is not necessary if introductory elements are very short. The writer makes a choice.

EXAMPLES: When they arrived they bought tickets. (correct)
When they arrived, they bought tickets. (correct)
In New York the winters are cold. (correct)
In New York, the winters are cold. (correct)

Skill Guide 12: Pronoun Forms

Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent

PROBLEM: Marjorie cut his finger. (incorrect, if she cut her own finger)
Jack and Bill received his award. (incorrect, if both received awards)
One of the girls did their assignment early. (incorrect, if she did her own assignment)
Has everyone brought their book? (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Pronouns agree with their antecedents in number and gender. An antecedent is a word or group of words to which the pronoun refers. Gender means male or female.

EXAMPLES: Jack and Bill received their awards.
One of the girls did her assignment early.
Has everyone brought his book?

Note 1: Be sure that the pronoun agrees with its antecedent, not an intervening prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLES: One of the boys sang his song marvelously.
Sarita, with her sisters helping, made her bed perfectly.
Each of the nurses received his paycheck today.

Note 2: Pronouns ending in **-one** or **-body** are singular. The word **every** is also considered to be singular.

EXAMPLES: Everyone must complete her own project.
Someone may have lost his book.
No one in the class has brought her violin today.
Every girl has lost her pencil.

Note 3: Consider conjunctions when determining if an antecedent is singular or plural.

EXAMPLES: Both Thomas and Noah had completed their chores.
Neither Tom nor Noah had completed his chores.
Either Jeanette or Elizabeth must have her key.
Both Jeanette and Elizabeth must have their keys.

Skill Guide 13: Punctuation

Commas With Nonrestrictive Modifiers

PROBLEM: Carlotta's new car shining brightly in the afternoon sun is a graduation present. (incorrect)
Carlotta's new car which was shining brightly in the afternoon sun is a graduation present. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Use commas to set off nonrestrictive phrases or clauses. These word groups are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: Carlotta's new car, shining brightly in the afternoon sun, is a graduation present.
Carlotta's new car, which was shining brightly in the sun, is a graduation present.
Mary Cardosa, who has a great deal of talent, is a senior this year.
Roosevelt Gardner, wearing a yellow jacket, walked into the room.
Iowa City, which was once the state capital, is my hometown.
Alison Wellington, angered by her team's poor performance, left the locker room before the game ended.
I saw the cause of the accident, a kitten in the highway.

Note 1: Use commas to set off nonrestrictive appositives. An appositive is a noun or pronoun, often with modifiers or in a groups of words, which is placed after another noun or pronoun to identify it more fully.

EXAMPLES: Mr. Thomas, my biology teacher, has been teaching at our high school for nine years.
George Swanetti, who is an old friend of the family, visited our home last summer.
I have never seen *Jaws*, a movie about sharks.
Martin Luther King's Birthday, a new American holiday, is celebrated in January.

Note 2: Do not use commas if the word group is necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLES: The student who has the most talent in the senior class is Benjamin. (necessary)
A man wearing a yellow jacket walked into the room. (necessary)
Anyone who is late will be asked for an excuse. (necessary)
I wanted to trade the car which had been in the accident. (necessary)
The playwright Thornton Wilder wrote a play *The Skin of Our Teeth* (necessary)

Skill Guide 14: Usage

Common Errors

PROBLEM: The affect of the illness was obvious. (incorrect)
He got the money off of his neighbor. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Correct usage should be followed concerning these common errors.

A Lot, Alot

A lot means many.

Alot is always incorrect. There is no such word.

EXAMPLE: The child has a lot of problems.

All Right, Alright

All right is always spelled as two words.

Alright is always incorrect. There is no such word.

EXAMPLE: This paper is all right to hand in today.

Could Have, Could Of, Must Have, Must Of

Could have, must have are correct helping verbs.

Could of, must of are always incorrect.

EXAMPLE: The children could have asked directions.

Its, It's, Its'

Its is possessive. It's is the contraction for it is.

Its' is always incorrect.

Off Of, From

Off of is always incorrect. Use from.

EXAMPLE: He took it from his friend.

Real, Really

Real is an adjective.

Really is an adverb.

EXAMPLES: That is a real difficulty. (modifies a noun)

He really was expecting me to fail. (modifies a verb)

He swims real well. (Real is an adjective. It cannot modify well. Use very instead.)

Regardless, Irregardless

Regardless means with no heed.

Irregardless is always incorrect. There is no such word.

EXAMPLE: Regardless of the weather, we will have a picnic.

Through, Thru

Through is always correct. Thru is an informal spelling.

Your, You're

Your is possessive. You're is the contraction for you are.

Whose, Who's

Whose is possessive. Who's is the contraction for who is or who has.

Skill Guide 15: Verb Forms

Problem Verbs

PROBLEM: He laid down to rest. (incorrect)
Set right here for a while. (incorrect)
He lead us through the forest. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Use the correct verb form. In some cases, two closely related verbs have different meanings. In other cases, the forms of a verb may cause difficulty.

Note 1: To Lie means to recline, to rest, to remain in a lying position.
To lay means to put, to place something.

EXAMPLES: Try to lie down and rest.
He plans to lay the books here.

Note 2: The forms of to lie: lie (present), lay (past), have lain (past participle), is lying (present participle)
The forms of to lay: lay (present), laid (past), have laid (past participle), is laying (present participle)

EXAMPLES: Lay the book on the table. (present)
He laid his coat on the back of the chair. (past)
She lay on the couch to watch the movie. (past)
They have lain down to rest. (past participle)

Note 3: To sit means to rest, to be in an upright position.
To set means to put something, to place.

EXAMPLES: I plan to sit here in the sun for a few minutes.
I plan to set the magazines on the coffee table.

Note 4: The forms of to sit: sit (present), sat (past), have sat (past participle), is sitting (present participle)
The forms of to set: set (present), set (past), have set (past participle), is setting (present participle)

EXAMPLES: He sat quietly in the hospital corridor.
He set the papers on the typewriter.
All of them have sat patiently during the concert.
No one has set a time for the party yet.

Note 5: **Lead, Led, Lead**

Lead means to go first. (Rhymes with **need**)

Led means went first. (Past tense)

Lead means a heavy metal. (Rhymes with **dead**)

The forms of to lead: Lead (which rhymes with **deed**) is the present form.
Led is the past and past participle. Leading is the present participle.

EXAMPLES: Abraham leads the team in scoring this year.
Who led the team last year?
The coach has led me to think that it was Arnold.

Skill Guide 16: Punctuation

Semicolon Use

PROBLEM: Marybeth and Ellen played basketball; and then took a shower. (incorrect)
Joselle bought her ticket in January, however, she never received the ticket. (incorrect)
Alice has visited France, Spain, and England, and Africa will be her next vacation spot. (incorrect)
Everyone visited Chicago, Illinois, Denver, Colorado, Seattle, Washington, and Miami, Florida. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Use a semicolon to separate. Since semicolons are part comma and part period, they are often used incorrectly. Unless the sentence clearly contains one of the situations described below, it is probably correct to use a comma or a period instead of a semicolon.

Note 1: Use a semicolon between main clauses which are not joined by a conjunction. (A main clause is a group of words with a subject and a verb. The main clause can stand alone, even though it is a part of a sentence.)

EXAMPLES: Marybeth and Ellen played basketball; they then took a shower.
Christina is captain of the basketball team; Ted is captain of the football team.
Christopher was elected homeroom representative; he will be attending the first meeting on Friday.

Note 2: Use a semicolon between main clauses which are joined by the following conjunctions: **however, then, still, nevertheless, therefore, also, consequently, thus, furthermore, instead, otherwise, besides, moreover.**

Note: A period may also be used before the conjunction.

EXAMPLES: Joselle bought her ticket in January; however, she never received the ticket.
Our football team suffered many injuries this year; still, we had a winning season.
Winter vacation will be shorter this year; therefore, we are not planning to vacation in Florida.
We have purchased a home. However, we have not moved in.

Note 3: Use a semicolon between main clauses when commas in the clauses make the sentence confusing.

EXAMPLE: Alice has visited France, Spain, and England; and Africa will be her next vacation spot.

Note 4: Use a semicolon between items in a series if those items contain commas.

EXAMPLE: The Student Council elected its officers: Sara Longfellow, president; Elwood Harrison, vice-president; Janna Westlake, secretary; and Peg Norton, treasurer.

Skill Guide 17: Dangling/Misplaced Modifiers

PROBLEM: Sleeping during class, his grades suffered. (incorrect)
Running down the hall, my jacket caught on a nail. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Dangling or misplaced modifiers can cause confusion for the reader. A dangling or misplaced modifier occurs when there is confusion about the word in the sentence that a modifier describes. This situation is corrected by rewriting the sentence so that it is clear.

Examples Sleeping during class, his grades suffered. (incorrect)
Sleeping during class, he learned little. (correct)

At the age of four, Alice's family moved to Texas. (incorrect)
When Alice was four, she and her family moved to Texas. (correct)

Although eager to make the honor roll, Ted's grades were lower this semester than last semester. (incorrect)
Although eager to make the honor roll, Ted did not study and his grades were lower this semester than last semester. (correct)

Wearing only a thin jacket, the winter wind was unbearable. (incorrect)
Wearing only a thin jacket, Jason found the winter wind unbearable. (correct)

Running down the hall, my jacket caught on a nail. (incorrect)
Running down the hall, I caught my jacket on a nail. (correct)

To improve our wrestling team, new weight equipment was purchased by our school. (incorrect)
To improve our wrestling team, the school purchased new weight equipment. (correct)

Driving on the beach, a rock hit my windshield. (incorrect)
While I was driving on the beach, a rock hit my windshield. (correct)

While jogging down the street, a car nearly hit me. (incorrect)
While jogging down the street, I was nearly hit by a car. (correct)

Skill Guide 18: Parallel Construction

PROBLEM: The new high school is large, rambling, and it looks ugly. (incorrect)
I enjoy reading, writing, and to dance. (incorrect)

PRINCIPLE: Parallel construction means expressing ideas of equal importance in a sentence in similar (equal) form.

Example 1: The new high school is large, rambling, and it looks ugly. (incorrect)

Explanation: All of the items in the series are adjectives, and the final item should also be an adjective, not a clause.

The new high school is large, rambling, and ugly. (correct)

Example 2: I enjoy reading, writing, and to dance. (incorrect)

Explanation: The first two items are **-ing** forms, and the final item should also be an **-ing** form, not an infinitive.

I enjoy reading, writing, and dancing. (correct)

Example 3: Charlie is not only talented as a writer but also as an artist. (incorrect)

Explanation: The items following the words **not only** and **but also** must be worded in exactly the same manner.

Charlie is talented not only as a writer but also as an artist. (correct)

Example 4: The juniors decided that they neither found the dance nor the breakfast enjoyable. (incorrect)

Explanation: Place the correlative conjunctions **neither** and **nor** directly in front of the ideas that are parallel.

The juniors decided that they found neither the dance nor the breakfast enjoyable. (correct)
