



# **COMPASS Placement Test Review Packet**



## **For preparing to take the COMPASS Writing Placement Test**

(Funded through the Gulf-Coast PASS Grant)

# Table of Contents

## **The COMPASS Writing Test**

A Brief Description	3
Test Taking Strategies	4
Additional Help for the Compass Writing Placement Test	5

## **Writing—Part 1: Revising and Editing (The Objective Portion)**

List of skills	7
Practice Essay 1 (and answers)	8
Practice Essay 2 (and answers)	12

## **Writing—Part 2: Writing the Essay**

Scoring Criteria and Essay Writing Tips	16
Scoring Rubric for the Compass Essay	18
How to Write a Successful Essay	19
Practice Prompts	21

## **Appendices: Writing Skills Practice**

Appendix A: Skills Practice: Fragments, Run-ons, and Comma Splices	23
Appendix B: Skills Practice: Verbs	38
Appendix C: Skills Practice: Pronouns	83
Appendix D: Skills Practice: Punctuation and Mechanics	90
Appendix E: Skills Practice: Commonly Confused Words	103
Appendix F: Skills Practice: Transitional Devices	108
Appendix G: Skills Practice: Shifts	116
Appendix H: Skills Practice: Additional Resources for Practice	123

# The COMPASS Writing Test: A Brief Description

The COMPASS Writing Placement test consists of two sections: a multiple choice section that tests students' grammar and editing skills, and an essay situation that requires students to write a multi-paragraph essay. Both sections are UNTIMED.

**Section 1: Writing Skills Placement Test.** The first section consists of several multiple choice questions that requires students to find and correct errors in essays in the areas of usage and mechanics, including basic grammar, punctuation and sentence structure, and rhetorical skills, including strategy, organization and style. It is a self-adjusting, multiple choice test that is taken at the computer. The answer to your current question will determine the next question; it will stop once it has determined your level. Consequently the test is untimed and has a different number of questions for each student. It also means that you will see questions that you don't know, because the test will ask you more and more difficult questions until it has found something that you don't know. Just do your best you can for each question the test presents to you. Listed below are the categories of errors that the test covers:

1. Punctuation (commas, apostrophes, end punctuation)
2. Spelling (commonly confused words)
3. Capitalization
4. Usage (word choice, word form)
5. Verb formation/agreement
6. Relationships of clauses (including the identification of fragments, run-ons, and comma splices)
7. Shifts in construction (including improperly formed compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences)
8. Organization and supporting details (including use of transitional devices)

**Section 2: The Essay.** The **COMPASS e-Write** test consists of one writing prompt that defines an issue or problem and describes two points of view on that issue. Students are asked to respond to a question about their position on the issue described in the prompt. The essay will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Focus**—consistency and clarity in identifying and maintaining the main idea or point of view
- **Content**—extent to which the topic is addressed by the development of ideas and the specificity of details and examples
- **Organization**—unity and coherence achieved through logical sequence of ideas
- **Style**—how effectively the chosen language enhances the writer's purpose
- **Conventions**—control of mechanics in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation.

# Test-Taking Strategies

## 1. Take the Placement Test Seriously

Giving your best during the test can save you several semesters of math, reading, and writing classes, which can save you time and money. What you don't know, you don't know. That's fine. But if you know something, make sure you show it on the test so that you are placed into the appropriate class for your skill level.

## 2. Prepare For the Test

It is important that you review your knowledge before you take the test, particularly if you have not been in school for many years. Go over the following parts in this review packet to refresh your memory about the things you once knew. You may also choose to take one of the COMPASS review sessions offered by the SEA Center (in the Learning Center.) This packet is not designed to help you learn material that you never knew. For that you should take a class.

It is equally important, however, that you are physically prepared for the test. Be sure to get enough sleep the night before, and eat something nutritious before arriving for the test. Don't consume anything with caffeine or a lot of sugar right before the test. Caffeine might make you feel more jittery and less patient, causing you to skip important steps. Too much sugar will give you a short energy boost followed by a sense of fatigue. Drink water or tea instead.

## 3. Take Your Time

The Compass Test is not timed, which means that you can take as much time as you need. Make use of that! Read the questions carefully, think about them, do your work on paper, and then choose an answer. Your score does not depend on how long you take for each question. Your score *only* depends on whether you choose the right answer.

## 4. Read the Questions Carefully

Don't assume anything. Follow the instructions of the question exactly. Read all the details very carefully. A simple 'not' can change everything around. It helps to copy the question onto paper and underline the important information or rewrite it in your own words.

## 5. Take a Break

You can take a break whenever you like! Just go to the testing supervisor, and s/he will save your work. You can continue when you come back. You can even come back the next day. This is very important because in order to do well on the test you need to concentrate. So if you need to use the restroom, go. If you are thirsty or hungry, go drink and eat. If you are tired, get up and take a walk or go home and come back the next day.

## **Additional Resources for the COMPASS Placement Test**

Succeeding on the COMPASS Writing Placement Test can make a big difference in your college career. Placing as high as you can will help you save time and money. You may want to use some of the following resources BEFORE you take the placement test.

### **Official Practice Questions (including essay topic)**

The following link provides official practice questions created by the producer of the exam.

<http://www.act.org/compass/sample/index.html>

### **Practice Exercises for Part 1: Writing Skills**

The following link provides students with REALISTIC practice passages that are very similar to the actual writing skills test on the COMPASS. Students get immediate feedback after completing the practices and have an opportunity to re-do all missed questions.

<https://web.gsc.edu/fs/mhorton/lenglish/compasspractice/passage1/compass1.html>

### **COMPASS Writing Placement Test Live Review Sessions**

Lone Star College—North Harris offers instructor-led review sessions for all students and prospective students. These sessions prepare students for both the grammar portion and the essay portion of the exam. For more information, contact the LSC Sea Center (see contact information below). For the dates, times, and locations of the review sessions, go to the following link: <http://www.lonestar.edu/19081.htm>

### **Tutorial Assistance at Lone Star College—North Harris**

As you work through the practice problems in this packet, you may have some questions. To get help with any topic related to writing or to have a professional review of your practice essay, go to the following link: <http://www.lonestar.edu/nh-sea-center.htm>. You may also call (281) 618-7190, or come by the SEA Center, located in the Academic Building, room 200 (the Learning Center) to schedule an appointment.

# Writing—Part 1: Revising and Editing (The Multiple Choice Portion)

The first part of the writing COMPASS placement test measures your ability to detect and correct errors in an essay. This section will have an essay on the left side of the screen. You must click on the sentences within the essay in order to see the questions, which will be displayed on the right side of the screen. (You will be able to do some practice questions before you begin the real test.)

You will be given the following instructions:

The COMPASS Writing Test is UNTIMED. You may work at your own speed. You will be shown one or more essays on the screen. Each essay contains errors. You must find the errors and then choose the best answer to correct each error. Five answer options are provided.

Not all parts of the essay can be highlighted. If you click on an area and it does not highlight, this means no test question is associated with that part of the essay.

After you finish editing the essay, you will answer a few questions about the essay as a whole.

If you need a reminder about how to answer questions, click the Help button. Before you start the Writing Skills Test, you will learn how to take it. Now, click on the OK button to begin taking the practice test.

## Testing Taking Tips

Based on these instructions, you should keep in mind the following important test taking strategies:

**Tip 1:** Read each sentence carefully. Click on every part of the essay to make sure that you are not missing any of the test questions.

**Tip 2:** Remember that some parts of the essay will be correct. The first choice will always be the passage as it is written (with no changes from the original).

**Tip 3:** After you finish reading each sentence separately and have finished editing the whole essay, read the whole essay again. Remember, the last few questions will ask you content questions (like questions about adding or taking away details), so you must understand the whole essay!

# List of Editing Skills and Abbreviations

The following is a list of the editing skills tested in the Writing Skills portion of the COMPASS. This list includes the abbreviation of each skill that will be used in the practice essays and exercises in this packet.

## Punctuation

- Comma (C)
- Apostrophe (APOS)
- Semi-colon (SC)
- Quotation mark (QU)
- Colon (COL)

## Sentence Structure

- Fragment (FR)
- Run-on (RO)
- Comma Splice (CS)
- Faulty Coordination (COORD)
- Faulty Subordination (SUB) (including relative clauses—which, who, that)
- Mixed Sentence Construction (MX)
- Faulty Parallel Structure (PAR)

## Word Choice

- Spelling (SP)
- Wrong Word (WW)
- Word Form (Word Ending) (WORDFORM)

## Verbs

- Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA)
- Verb Form (Verb)
- Verb Tense (Tense)

## Pronouns

- Pronoun Agreement (PROA)
- Pronoun Reference (PROREF)
- Pronoun Case (CASE)
- Point of View (POV)

# Practice Essay 1

Read the passage below. With a yellow highlighter, identify all editing errors (see list on p. 7 of this packet). Then, in the space above the error, write the correction.

## Music in Mexico

<sup>1</sup>*Baile Folklórico*, as it is called, defines a certain group of people, region, and folkloric history as well as a national spirit. <sup>2</sup>The best-known category is identified as *Charro* and *China Poblana* songs and dances? <sup>3</sup>This type comes from the state of Jalisco. Which includes Mexico City and is perhaps the most famous of all the Mexican music and regional dancing. <sup>4</sup>The *China Poblana* costume consist of a white blouse with a square or round low neck adorned with embroideries, stitched in vivid colors. <sup>5</sup>The male partner is the *Charro*, who's costume resembles the dress of typical Mariachis.

<sup>6</sup>Another identifiable category comes from the state of Oaxaca, which is the most southern coast of southern Mexico in the area of Tehuantepec. <sup>7</sup>The traditional dress is a short blouse with a round or square neck. And a skirt that is an extension of the blouse and hangs below the knee. <sup>8</sup>A pleated white lace skirt then covers down to the feet. <sup>9</sup>Traditionally, we dance barefooted and may have a brilliantly colored flower decoration carried on our heads or in our hands as we move to the rhythm of the music.

<sup>10</sup>Another famous and distinct dance and music category is called *La Jarocha*, which comes from Mexico's Port of Veracruz. <sup>11</sup>The folk dances and songs in this state is extremely happy, they are called *huapangos*. <sup>12</sup>The performers sing and dance at the same time, improvising short, amusing verses. <sup>13</sup>The costume for the dancers is a white skirt for the women and pants for the men. <sup>14</sup>The woman's skirt is adorned with beautiful laces. <sup>15</sup>Over the skirt is a black apron embroidered with flowers and surrounded by black lace.

<sup>16</sup>Music to Mexicans is a thread that weaves them together in time. <sup>17</sup>Through each region has a distinct folk dance, all regions are connected through their unique and beautiful Mexican music.

Passage taken from Wingersky, Jo, et. al eds. *Writing Paragraphs and Essays*. Boston: Thompson Wadsworth. 2006.



## Questions for Practice Essay 1

Once you have finished editing the passage, reread it, and then answer the following questions about the WHOLE passage.

- 1) Which sentence would be the best thesis statement (main idea) for this essay?
  - A. Music and dance help people forget their problems.
  - B. The Mexican culture is built around dance.
  - C. Folk music and dance are more than an expression of art to Mexicans.
  
- 2) What would be the best placement for this sentence in paragraph 1: *The skirt is red flannel with sequins and two green satin stripes at the waist and lower part of the skirt.*
  - A. After sentence 2.
  - B. After sentence 4.
  - C. After sentence 5.
  
- 3) Which transition word could be added at the beginning of paragraph 3?
  - A. Finally,
  - B. However,
  - C. Therefore,
  
- 4) Where would this sentence belong in paragraph 3: *One example, La Bamba, is known worldwide, including a rendition that made the pop charts in the '60s in the United States.*
  - A. After sentence 10.
  - B. After sentence 11.
  - C. After sentence 13.
  
- 5) Which sentence does not fit with the style of this essay?
  - A. The folk dances and songs in this state are extremely happy, and they are called *huapangos*.
  - B. Traditionally, we dance barefooted and may have a brilliantly colored flower decoration carried on our heads or in our hands as we move to the rhythm of the music.
  - C. Music to Mexicans is a thread that weaves them together.

## Practice Essay 1 with Editing Corrections

(See page 7 for a list of abbreviations used.)

### Music in Mexico

<sup>1</sup> *Baile Folklorico*, as it is called, defines a certain group of people, region, and folkloric history as well as a national spirit. <sup>2</sup> The best-known category is identified as *Charro* and *China Poblana* songs and dances? <sup>3</sup> This type comes from the state of Jalisco, which includes Mexico City and is perhaps the most famous of all the Mexican music and regional dancing. (FRAG) <sup>4</sup> The *China Poblana* costume consists (SVA) of a white blouse with a square or round low neck adorned with embroideries, stitched in vivid colors. <sup>5</sup> The male partner is the *Charro*, whose (SP) costume resembles the dress of typical Mariachis.

<sup>6</sup> Another identifiable category comes from the state of Oaxaca, which is the most southern coast of southern Mexico (CAP) in the area of Tehuantepec. <sup>7</sup> The traditional dress is a short blouse with a round or square neck and a skirt that is an extension of the blouse and hangs below the knee. (FRAG) <sup>8</sup> A pleated white lace skirt then covers down to the feet. <sup>9</sup> Traditionally, performers dance barefooted and may have a brilliantly colored flower decoration carried on their heads or in their hands as they move to the rhythm of the music. (POV)

<sup>10</sup> Another famous and distinct dance and music category is called *La Jarocha*, which comes from Mexico's Port of Veracruz. <sup>11</sup> The folk dances and songs in this state are (SVA) extremely happy, and they are (CS) called *huapangos*. <sup>12</sup> The performers sing and dance at the same time, improvising short, amusing verses. <sup>13</sup> The costume for the dancers is a white skirt for the women and pants for the men. <sup>14</sup> The woman's (APOS) skirt is adorned with beautiful laces. <sup>15</sup> Over the skirt is a black apron embroidered with flowers and surrounded by black lace.

<sup>16</sup> Music to Mexicans is a thread that weaves them together in time. <sup>17</sup> Though (SP) each region has a distinct folk dance, all regions are connected through their unique and beautiful Mexican music.

Wingersky, Jo, et. al eds. *Writing Paragraphs and Essays*. Boston: Thompson Wadsworth. 2006.

## Answer Key to Questions for Practice Essay 1

- 1) Which sentence would be the best thesis statement (main idea) for this essay?
  - A. Music and dance help people forget their problems.
  - B. The Mexican culture is built around dance.**
  - C. Folk music and dance are more than an expression of art to Mexicans.
  
- 2) What would be the best placement for this sentence in paragraph 1: *The skirt is red flannel with sequins and two green satin stripes at the waist and lower part of the skirt.*
  - D. After sentence 2.
  - E. After sentence 4.**
  - F. After sentence 5.
  
- 3) Which transition word could be added at the beginning of paragraph 3?
  - A. Finally,**
  - B. However,
  - C. Therefore,
  
- 4) Where would this sentence belong in paragraph 3: *One example, La Bamba, is known worldwide, including a rendition that made the pop charts in the '60s in the United States.*
  - A. After sentence 10.
  - B. After sentence 11.**
  - C. After sentence 13.
  
- 5) Which sentence does not fit with the style of this essay?
  - A. The folk dances and songs in this state are extremely happy, and they are called *huapangos*.
  - B. Traditionally, we dance barefooted and may have a brilliantly colored flower decoration carried on our heads or in our hands as we move to the rhythm of the music.**
  - C. Music to Mexicans is a thread that weaves them together in time.

## Practice Essay 2

(Taken from the Official ACT COMPASS Practice Packet: <http://www.act.org/compass/sample/pdf/writing.pdf> )

Read the passage below. With a yellow highlighter, identify all editing errors (see list on p. 7 of this packet). Then, in the space above the error, write the correction.

### Grameen Bank

Bangladesh's economy is based primarily on small-scale enterprises ran by self-employed men and women. These small-business owners, who make a living as shopkeepers or providers of services, face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access to credit, particularly among the early start-up phase of an enterprise. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment he needs to make his business productive, is often, frequently unavailable to those who possess little collateral. Thus, many people which would benefit from credit are denied access to it.

The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, who was a fine soccer player in his youth, provides the only unique alternative via loans to prospective business owners, whether they are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable with one another, congregating in small groups that meet once a week. If one member will fail to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit in the future thus, group members have a strong incentive to succeed and support others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank has lent two billion dollars, and his customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans. Such results have led to the creation of similar programs.

## Questions about the Whole Passage

Once you have finished editing the passage, reread it, and then answer the following questions about the **WHOLE** passage.

1. Suppose the writer wants to show that lending programs similar to the one administered by the Grameen Bank have been widely accepted. Which of the following phrases, if added to the last sentence of the essay, would best achieve that goal?

- A. to make credit available
- B. over the years
- C. around the world
- D. to encourage development
- E. with some variations

2. Suppose the writer had been asked to write an essay explaining the influence of the credit system developed by Muhammad Yunis on the economy of the United States. Does this article fulfill that assignment?

- A. Yes, because the article explains the work of Yunis and his success since 1976.
- B. Yes, because the article says that there are similar credit programs in the United States.
- C. Yes, because the economic influence of the Grameen Bank is felt throughout the world.
- D. No, because the article says that similar credit systems have been established but does not specifically mention the United States.
- E. No, because the article is concerned with the reputation of Yunis as an economist, rather than the credit system he developed.

3. Which of the following sentences, if added at the end of the first paragraph, would best make the point that there was a need for the Grameen Bank?

- A. This led to a stagnant economy in Bangladesh.
- B. Other people, however, are able to overcome a lack of credit.
- C. Collateral, therefore, is essential for a healthy economy.
- D. Of course, there are some start-up businesses that do not need loans at all.
- E. The banks, however, are able to lend their money in other countries.

## Practice Essay 2 with Editing Corrections

(See page 7 for a list of abbreviations used.)

### Grameen Bank

Bangladesh's economy is based primarily on small-scale enterprises **run** (TENSE) by self-employed men and women. These small-business owners, who make a living as shopkeepers or providers of services, face a problem common to proprietors everywhere: lack of access to credit, particularly **during** (WRONG WORD) the early start-up phase of an enterprise. Credit, which allows people to obtain the resources and equipment **they** (PROAGR) needs to make **their** (PROAGR) business productive, is often **\_\_\_** (Word Choice) unavailable to those who possess little collateral. Thus, many people **who** (SUB) would benefit from credit are denied access to it.

The Grameen Bank, founded in 1976 by economist Muhammad Yunis, **who studied economics at a highly regarded university**, (paragraph unity) provides the only unique alternative via loans to prospective business owners, **which** (SUB) are given only to those who fall below a certain level of assets. Instead of putting up collateral, Grameen customers are accountable **to** (word choice) one another, congregating in small groups that meet once a week. If one member will fail to repay a loan, the entire group is unable to obtain credit in **the future; thus, group members** (CS) have a strong incentive to succeed and support others in the group. In the last twenty years, the Grameen Bank has lent two billion dollars, and **its** (PROAGR) customers have repaid 97 percent of their loans. Such results have led to the creation of similar programs.

## Answers to Questions for Practice Essay 2

1. Suppose the writer wants to show that lending programs similar to the one administered by the Grameen Bank have been widely accepted. Which of the following phrases, if added to the last sentence of the essay, would best achieve that goal?

- A. to make credit available
- B. over the years
- C. around the world
- D. to encourage development
- E. with some variations

2. Suppose the writer had been asked to write an essay explaining the influence of the credit system developed by Muhammad Yunis on the economy of the United States. Does this article fulfill that assignment?

- A. Yes, because the article explains the work of Yunis and his success since 1976.
- B. Yes, because the article says that there are similar credit programs in the United States.
- C. Yes, because the economic influence of the Grameen Bank is felt throughout the world.
- D. No, because the article says that similar credit systems have been established but does not specifically mention the United States.
- E. No, because the article is concerned with the reputation of Yunis as an economist, rather than the credit system he developed.

3. Which of the following sentences, if added at the end of the first paragraph, would best make the point that there was a need for the Grameen Bank?

- A. This led to a stagnant economy in Bangladesh.
- B. Other people, however, are able to overcome a lack of credit.
- C. Collateral, therefore, is essential for a healthy economy.
- D. Of course, there are some start-up businesses that do not need loans at all.
- E. The banks, however, are able to lend their money in other countries.

# Writing—Part 2: The Essay

## Scoring Criteria and Writing Tips

After completing the multiple choice portion of the writing placement test, you will be required to write an essay. The essay is an extremely important part of the test: your overall placement score will be dramatically affected by your performance on the essay. Here are some important tips that will help you be successful:

1. **Know what kind of writing prompt (topic) to expect.** The prompt will be a situation with two different solutions (or courses of action). You must choose ONE course of action and write a response that ARGUES for that course of action (or side). In the box below is a sample topic that is very similar to the topic you may encounter:

A School Board is concerned that the state's requirements for core courses in mathematics, English, science, and social studies may prevent students from taking important elective courses like music, other languages, and vocational education. The School Board would like to encourage more high school students to take elective courses and is considering two proposals. One proposal is to lengthen the school day to provide students with the opportunity to take elective courses. The other proposal is to offer elective courses in the summer. Write a letter to the School Board in which you argue for lengthening the school day or for offering elective courses during the summer, explaining why you think your choice will encourage more students to take elective courses.

2. **Take your time.** There is no time limit on the essay. If you need to take a break between the objective portion of the exam and the essay portion, take one! Simply ask your testing center coordinator. You should spend AT LEAST ONE HOUR on your essay. Use your time to think about the writing topic so that you **have something to say** and can **organize what you want to say**. Once you have written your essay, take another break before **editing to eliminate major sentence and word errors**.
3. **Understand the scoring criteria.** Listed below is a list of the criteria used in judging your essay along with an explanation of each criterion.

**FOCUS:** Your essay should have a clearly stated THESIS that takes a side on the issue. This THESIS should be stated at the end of the opening paragraph and should be supported throughout the essay with body paragraphs that support the stated thesis.

**CONTENT:** Your essay should have many different examples and details that support the point you make. **MAKE SURE THAT YOUR ESSAY MEETS THE MINIMUM WORD REQUIREMENT OF 300!**



**ORGANIZATION:** Your essay should have body paragraphs that begin with a sentence that guides the paragraph. Your essay should also include transitional devices at the beginning of your body paragraphs and within paragraphs as you move from example to example.

**STYLE:** Your essay should reflect effective sentence variety, strong word choice, and a consistent point of view.

**CONVENTIONS:** Your essay should be free from major errors as discussed in this packet: sentence fragments, run-ons, comma splices, agreement problems, confusion of commonly confused words, etc.

4. **Avoid blunders that will cause your essay to be evaluated lower than it should be evaluated.** Your essay will be graded by a computer-generated evaluator. Follow the tips below to ensure that your essay receives the highest possible score:
- **Meet or exceed the minimum word requirement.** Your essay should be between 300 and 600 words. Make sure that your essay meets the minimum word requirement (at least 300 words). If you do not meet the word requirement, the computer-generated evaluation will assume that your essay does not have enough details for a passing essay. A general guideline is to make sure that your opening paragraph contains several sentences of background information in addition to the thesis. Also, make sure that each body paragraph contains several examples that support the point you are making.
  - **Use transitional devices at the beginning of each body paragraph.** The computer-generated evaluator will look for transitional devices. Do not use simple number transitions like “first,” “second,” and “finally”; instead, create more complex transitional phrases and clauses. (See the section on transitional phrases in this packet.)
  - **Choose your words carefully.** Use concrete words rather than general ones.
  - **Use a variety of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex).** You must do more than simply avoid errors. You need to demonstrate that you can write a variety of types of sentences.
  - **Edit to eliminate major sentence errors like run-ons, fragments, and comma splices.** The computer-generated evaluator can detect these errors, so make sure that you eliminate them!

**ADVICE FROM THE CREATORS OF COMPASS (THE WRITING PLACEMENT TEST):**

Your essay is evaluated according to how well you:

- Formulate a clear and focused position on the issue in the prompt
- Support that position with reasons and evidence appropriate to the position taken
- Focus on concerns of the specified audience (e.g., school board)
- Develop your argument in a coherent and logical manner
- Express your ideas using clear, effective language

You will receive a lower score for not taking a position on the specified issue, not supporting that position with reasons and evidence, not developing the argument, or not expressing those ideas using clear, effective language.

## Scoring Rubric for the COMPASS Essay

Students will be given a holistic score between 2 (poor) and 8 (excellent) based on the following criteria: focus, content, organization, style, and conventions. The following rubric describes each of the possible COMPASS essay scores (from the official ACT web site: <http://www.act.org/compass/pdf/ewritefaq.pdf>.)

Score	Description
2	The response shows an inadequately developed sense of purpose, audience, and situation. Although the writer attempts to address the topic defined in the prompt, the response displays more than one of the following significant problems: Much of the style and language may be inappropriate for the occasion; focus may be unclear or unsustained; support is very minimal; sentences may be poorly constructed; word choice may be imprecise; or there may be many errors in usage and mechanics.
3	The response reflects some characteristics of a Level 2 response and some elements of a Level 4 response.
4	The response shows a partially developed sense of purpose, audience, and situation. The writer takes a position on the issue defined in the prompt and attempts to support that position, but there may be little elaboration or explanation. Focus may be unclear and not entirely sustained. Some effort to organize and sequence ideas is apparent, but organization may lack coherence. A limited control of language is apparent: word choice may be imprecise; sentences may be poorly constructed or confusing; and there may be many errors in usage and mechanics.
5	The response reflects some characteristics of a Level 4 response and some elements of a Level 6 response.
6	The response shows a developed sense of purpose, audience, and situation. The writer takes a position on the issue defined in the prompt with some elaboration or explanation. Focus is clear and generally maintained. Organization is generally clear. A competency with language is apparent: word choice and sentences are generally clear though there may be some errors in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.
7	The response reflects some characteristics of a Level 6 response and some characteristics of a Level 8 response.
8	The response shows a thoughtful and well-developed sense of purpose, audience, and situation. The writer takes a position on the issue defined in the prompt with well-developed elaboration or explanation. Focus is clear and consistently maintained. Organization is unified and coherent. Good command of the language is apparent: word choice is precise; sentences are well structured and varied; and there are few errors in usage and mechanics.

# How to Write a Successful COMPASS Essay

Even though you will not know the topic that you will be assigned before the exam, you can still prepare. The following steps will give you some strategies for writing a successful essay:

**Step 1: Choose a side.** Spend some time before you write to choose a side. You will be given a situation that has several different options. Your job is to pick ONE option and write an ARGUMENT that demonstrates why that option is best. You should choose the option for which you have the most examples and details. Some students use a planning device called a T-chart at this stage. A t-chart allows you to brainstorm different ideas for each option; then, you can choose the option that has the most details. The t-chart below is one that a student might write in response to the following sample prompt:

A School Board is concerned that the state's requirements for core courses in mathematics, English, science, and social studies may prevent students from taking important elective courses like music, other languages, and vocational education. The School Board would like to encourage more high school students to take elective courses and is considering two proposals. One proposal is to lengthen the school day to provide students with the opportunity to take elective courses. The other proposal is to offer elective courses in the summer. Write a letter to the School Board in which you argue for lengthening the school day or for offering elective courses during the summer, explaining why you think your choice will encourage more students to take elective courses.

Sample T-chart

Proposal 1: Lengthen the school day	Proposal 2: Offer summer electives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would hurt students who have after-school jobs—some students must work to save for college or to buy a car</li> <li>• Would hurt extracurricular activities like athletics and band; these activities are important for college applications and for revenue for the school.</li> <li>• Would reduce downtime/rest time for students. Students already don't get enough rest. No time for homework or family time.</li> <li>• Would be great for students who need to stay busy after school in order to stay out of trouble. A work day is 9 hours/day, so why not make school the same length?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad for families—reduce time for family vacations; reduce available time for high schoolers who provide babysitting for younger siblings</li> <li>• Would be great for vocational learning—could spend all day learning job skills rather than just school skills.</li> <li>• Would not work for electives that relate to school activities like sports and band—these groups already practice in the summer, and they would need to continue to practice in the fall and spring</li> <li>• Costs more money—would have to pay teachers more—teachers usually have the summer off—would have to pay them extra to get them to teach in the summer. Would also cost more because of the cost of cooling the building and providing lunch.</li> </ul>

Notice that the writer lists details under each option that he/she could use in an essay. Now the writer needs to choose a side based on which side has the most details.

**Step 2: Organize your points.** Once you have chosen a side, you need to organize your points. Remember that you must begin with an introduction that provides your reader with background information and previews the main points of the essay, so you need to know what you are going to say before you begin. Here is a sample outline for an essay:

- I. Introductory Paragraph
  - a. Background information
  - b. Thesis: Includes the option you support and the reasons you support that option
- II. Body Paragraph
  - a. Starter Sentence that explains one reason you support the option you have chosen and includes a transitional device.
  - b. Multiple details and examples that support this reason
- III. Body Paragraph
  - a. Starter Sentence that explains another reason you support the option you have chosen and includes a transitional device.
  - b. Multiple details and examples that support this reason
- IV. Body Paragraph
  - a. Starter Sentence that explains a final reason you support the option you have chosen and includes a transitional device.
  - b. Multiple details and examples that support this reason
- V. Concluding Paragraph
  - a. Restates the reasons you have supported the option you have chosen
  - b. Sums up your position on the issue

NOTE: You do not have to follow this formula; instead, this outline is one example that illustrates how to organize a successful essay.

**Step 3: Write your paper.** As you write your paper, relax. Remember that you can always change, delete, or revise anything you write, so don't worry about every sentence you write.

**Step 4: Revise for details, organization, and vocabulary.** Once you have written your essay, you are only half way done! Now you need to make sure that your essay is well-organized and detailed. You may want to take a break before revising for details, organization (and transitions!), and vocabulary.

**Step 5: Edit and proofread to eliminate major errors.** Once you have said everything you want to say about the topic, it is time to edit. You should already be familiar with the types of errors you tend to make. (If you are not, try writing a sample essay and discussing it with a tutor before you take the COMPASS). For a list of errors to avoid, see p. 7 of this packet.

## Practice Prompts

The best way to prepare for the essay is to write a practice essay that is similar to the one you will write for COMPASS and discuss your practice essay with your English teacher or with an English tutor. The following practice prompts are structured like the COMPASS Essay.

**Practice Prompt 1:** A School Board is concerned that the state's requirements for core courses in mathematics, English, science, and social studies may prevent students from taking important elective courses like music, other languages, and vocational education. The School Board would like to encourage more high school students to take elective courses and is considering two proposals. One proposal is to lengthen the school day to provide students with the opportunity to take elective courses. The other proposal is to offer elective courses in the summer. **Write a letter to the School Board in which you argue for lengthening the school day or for offering elective courses during the summer, explaining why you think your choice will encourage more students to take elective courses.**

Taken from [www.ACT.org](http://www.ACT.org) (the official COMPASS web site)

**Practice Prompt 2:** LSCS has funds for improving security on campus. One proposal is to add security doors in all buildings that require students to have a magnetized school ID in order to enter the building. The security doors also serve as metal detectors. The second proposal does not add any facility changes; instead, it doubles the number of police officers during the day and triples the number at night. Write a letter to the President's executive board arguing for either adding security doors OR adding additional officers.

**Practice Prompt 3:** Your local college is concerned about students finding jobs once they graduate. The college advisory board is considering a requirement stating that all college seniors must get part-time jobs working at least 10 hours/week. The college would assist students in finding jobs. Argue FOR or AGAINST this proposal.

**Practice Prompt 4:** Your local college has received some money for physical improvements to the college. One proposal is to enlarge and update the student learning center, which houses tutors, the open computer lab, and other resources students use. The other proposal is to add a recreational facility, which could be used by all students for personal fitness and by the college's sports teams. Write a letter to your college's advisory board arguing for either the enlargement of the learning center OR a new recreational facility.

## **Appendices: Writing Skills Practice**

The exercises that follow are designed to help student practice identifying errors. These exercises are more effective if used in conjunction with the results of the Practice Essays in this packet.

# Appendix A

## Skills Practice: Fragments, Run-ons, and Comma Splices

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/fragments-and-run-ons/>

If instructors have ever returned your papers with “frag”, “S.F.”, “R.O.”, or “run-on” written in the margin, they are pointing out problems with sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

### The Basics

Before we get to the problems and how to fix them, let’s take a minute to review some information that is so basic you’ve probably forgotten it.

**What is a complete sentence?** A complete sentence is not merely a group of words with a capital letter at the beginning and a period or question mark at the end. A complete sentence has three components:

1. a subject (the actor in the sentence)
2. a predicate (the verb or action), and
3. a complete thought (it can stand alone and make sense—it’s independent).

Some sentences can be very short, with only two or three words expressing a complete thought, like this:

*John waited.*

This sentence has a subject (*John*) and a verb (*waited*), and it expresses a complete thought. We can understand the idea completely with just those two words, so again, it’s independent—an **independent clause**. But independent clauses (i.e., complete sentences) can be expanded to contain a lot more information, like this:

*John waited for the bus all morning.*

*John waited for the bus all morning in the rain last Tuesday.*

*Wishing he’d brought his umbrella, John waited for the bus all morning in the rain last Tuesday.*

*Wishing he’d brought his umbrella and dreaming of his nice warm bed, John waited for the bus all morning in the rain last Tuesday because his car was in the shop.*

As your sentences grow more complicated, it gets harder to spot and stay focused on the basic elements of a complete sentence, but if you look carefully at the examples above, you’ll see that the main thought is still that *John waited*—one main subject and one main verb. No matter how long or short the other sentence parts are, none of them can stand alone and make sense.

Being able to find the main subject, the main verb, and the complete thought is the first trick to learn for identifying fragments and run-ons.

## Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is an **incomplete sentence**. Some fragments are incomplete because they lack either a subject or a verb, or both. The fragments that most students have trouble with, however, are **dependent clauses**—they have a subject and a verb, so they look like complete sentences, but they don't express a complete thought. They're called "dependent" because they can't stand on their own (just like some people you might know who are SO dependent!). Look at these dependent clauses. They're just begging for more information to make the thoughts complete:

*Because his car was in the shop(What did he do?)*

*After the rain stops (What then?)*

*When you finally take the test (What will happen?)*

*Since you asked (Will you get the answer?)*

*If you want to go with me (What should you do?)*

Does each of these examples have a subject? Yes. Does each have a verb? Yes. So what makes the thought incomplete?? It's the first word (*Because, After, When, Since, If*). These words belong to a special class of words called **subordinators** or **subordinating conjunctions**. If you know something about subordinating conjunctions, you can probably eliminate 90% of your fragments.

First, you need to know that subordinating conjunctions do three things:

1. join two sentences together
2. make one of the sentences dependent on the other for a complete thought (make one a dependent clause)
3. indicate a logical relationship

Second, you need to recognize the subordinators when you see them. Here is a list of common subordinating conjunctions and the relationships they indicate:

**Cause / Effect:** because, since, so that

**Comparison / Contrast:** although, even though, though, whereas, while

**Place & Manner:** how, however, where, wherever

**Possibility / Conditions:** if, whether, unless

**Relation:** that, which, who

**Time:** after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until

Third, you need to know that the subordinator (and the whole dependent clause) doesn't have to be at the beginning of the sentence. The dependent clause and the independent clause can



switch places, but the whole clause moves as one big chunk. Look at how these clauses switched places in the sentence:

*Because his car was in the shop, John took the bus.  
John took the bus because his car was in the shop.*

Finally, you need to know that every dependent clause needs to be attached to an independent clause (remember, the independent clause can stand on its own).

**How do you find and fix your fragments?** Remember the basics: subject, verb, and complete thought. If you can recognize those things, you're halfway there. Then, scan your sentences for subordinating conjunctions. If you find one, first identify the whole chunk of the dependent clause (the subject and verb that go with the subordinator), and then make sure they're attached to an independent clause.

*John took the bus. (independent clause) Because his car was in the shop.  
(Dependent clause all by itself. Uh oh! Fragment!)*  
*John took the bus because his car was in the shop. (Hooray! It's fixed!)*

## Run-ons

These are also called **fused sentences**. You are making a run-on when you put two complete sentences (a subject and its predicate and another subject and its predicate) together in one sentence without separating them properly. Here's an example of a run-on:

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky.*

This one sentence actually contains two complete sentences. But in the rush to get that idea out, I made it into one incorrect sentence. Luckily, there are many ways to correct this run-on sentence.

You could use a semicolon:

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus; it is very garlicky.*

You could use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so):

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, for it is very garlicky. -OR- My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, and it is very garlicky.*

You could use a subordinating conjunction (see above):

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus because it is very garlicky. -OR- Because it is so garlicky, my favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus.*

You could make it into two separate sentences with a period in between:

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus. It is very garlicky.*

You could use an em-dash (a long dash) for emphasis:

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus—it is very garlicky.*

You CANNOT simply add a comma between the two sentences, or you'll end up with what's called a "comma splice." Here's an example of a **comma splice**:

*My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, it is very garlicky.*

You can fix a comma splice the same way you fix a run-on—either change the punctuation or add a conjunction. The good news is that writers tend to be either comma splicers or run-on artists, but almost never both. Which one are you? If you have particular trouble with comma splices, try looking at our handout on commas.

### **Finding run-ons**

As you can see, fixing run-ons is pretty easy once you see them—but how do you find out if a sentence is a run-on if you aren't sure? Rei R. Noguchi, in his book *Grammar and the Teaching of Writing*, suggests that you test your sentences with two methods:

1. Turn them into yes/no questions.
2. Turn them into tag questions (sentences that end with a questioning phrase at the very end—look at our examples below).

These are two things that nearly everyone can do easily if the sentence is not a run-on, but they become next to impossible if it is.

Look at the following sentence:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus.

If you turn it into a question that someone could answer with a yes or no, it looks like this:

Is my favorite Mediterranean spread hummus?

If you turn it into a tag question, it looks like this:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, isn't it?

The first sentence is complete and not a run-on, because our test worked. Now, try the test with the original run-on sentence:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky.

The yes/no question can only be made with each separate thought, not the sentence as a whole:

Is my favorite Mediterranean spread hummus? Is it very garlicky?

But not:

Is my favorite Mediterranean spread hummus is it very garlicky?

The tag question can also only be made with each separate thought, rather than the whole:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, isn't it? It's very garlicky, isn't it?

But never:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky, isn't it?

Neither test works for you, does it? That's because when you try, you immediately see that you have more than one complete concept in that sentence, and you can't make the whole thing turn into one question. Make sure you try both tests with each of your problem sentences, because you may trick yourself by just putting a tag on the last part and not noticing that it doesn't work on the first. Some people might not notice that "My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky isn't it?" is wrong, but most people will spot the yes/no question problem right away.

Every once in a while, you or your instructor will see a really long sentence and think it's a run-on when it isn't. Really long sentences can be tiring but not necessarily wrong—just make sure that yours aren't wrong by using the tests above.

## Exercise 1

Place a (✓) in the left hand column if the sentence is actually a fragment.

- \_\_\_ 1. While they were gone to the grocery store.
- \_\_\_ 2. Going to Florida and to Jamaica for Spring Break.
- \_\_\_ 3. Before the children have to go to bed.
- \_\_\_ 4. They are beautiful.
- \_\_\_ 5. Three of us went on the retreat.
- \_\_\_ 6. Because she had gone to her friend's house late at night without asking for permission.
- \_\_\_ 7. She won't eat them.
- \_\_\_ 8. I don't know when she's coming back.
- \_\_\_ 9. Since they left early in the morning.
- \_\_\_ 10. Mike doesn't know.
- \_\_\_ 11. Don't go into that room alone.
- \_\_\_ 12. After you return from the store.
- \_\_\_ 13. Because education is important.
- \_\_\_ 14. We are leaving at 3:00.
- \_\_\_ 15. Since she was dressed in white.
- \_\_\_ 16. While he is planning to be in Europe for the summer.
- \_\_\_ 17. There is nobody to help her.
- \_\_\_ 18. They are running four miles every morning.
- \_\_\_ 19. The importance of eating a healthy diet.
- \_\_\_ 20. When they arrive tomorrow.

## Answers

1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20

## Exercise 2

**Correct the following run-on sentences by dividing them into two complete sentences. Add a period to the end of the first sentence, and capitalize the first letter in the second sentence.**

**Example:** She wanted to go to the movie she called to find out what time the show started.

**Corrected:** She wanted to go to the movie. She called to find out what time the show started.

1. The red car is in the parking lot I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day before dawn was just too early.

## Answers

1. The red car is in the parking lot. I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class. All the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once. She didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes. I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant. He called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around. We had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early. You don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting. She made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation. They didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing. They gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony. Too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could. Everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me. I still couldn't fall asleep
14. She wanted to know her final grade. She was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot. He won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go. She had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment. He couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go. I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day. Before dawn was just too early.

### Exercise 3

**Correct the following run-on sentences by using a semicolon. Semicolons may be used to join independent clauses not joined by coordinating conjunctions.**

**Example:** She wanted to go to the movie she called to find out what time the show started.

**Corrected:** She wanted to go to the movie; she called to find out what time the show started.

1. The red car is in the parking lot I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day before dawn was just too early.

## Answers:

1. The red car is in the parking lot; I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class; all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once; she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes; I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant; he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around; we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early; you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting; she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation; they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing; they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony; too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could; everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me; I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade; she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep; the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot; he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go; she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment; he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go; I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day; before dawn was just too early.



## Exercise 4

**Correct the following run on sentences by using an appropriate coordinating conjunction and a comma. The coordinating conjunctions are *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so* (FANBOYS).**

**Example:** She wanted to go to the movie she called to find out what time the show started.

**Corrected:** She wanted to go to the movie, so she called to find out what time the show started.

1. The red car is in the parking lot I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day before dawn was just too early.

## Answers:

1. The red car is in the parking lot, but I don't know where the van and the motorcycle are.
2. She was the best student in the class, so all the study groups invited her to participate.
3. She found the house once, but she didn't think she could find it again.
4. There are four possible routes, but I don't know which is the best.
5. He wanted to meet the group at the restaurant, so he called to find out what time to arrive.
6. There weren't enough copies to go around, so we had to share the copies that were available.
7. You finished your work early, so you don't have to stay.
8. She didn't want to miss her meeting, so she made sure she left early.
9. They were in a desperate situation, and they didn't know what to do.
10. The children wanted to go fishing, so they gathered the supplies they needed.
11. She wanted to leave right after the ceremony, but too many people were around.
12. She sang as loudly as she could, so everybody heard her.
13. There was complete silence around me, but I still couldn't fall asleep.
14. She wanted to know her final grade, for she was the first one waiting for the grades to be posted.
15. The cat finally fell asleep, and the mouse ran through the room.
16. The player attempted a final shot, and he won the game for the team.
17. She didn't want to go, but she had no choice.
18. He had written down his assignment, but he couldn't remember where he put that piece of paper.
19. I was too sick to go, so I called and cancelled the plans.
20. I might have gone later in the day, but before dawn was just too early.

## Exercise 5

Select the sentence from each group that is a sentence fragment or a run-on sentence.

1. A. Probably two to three hours, depending on how hard the task is.  
B. The test seemed impossible, but I managed to make an A.  
C. We went shopping this past weekend.  
D. He wanted the blue one.
  
2. A. When you use the conjunctions and, for, nor, but, or, for, or, yet, so.  
B. They promised to be there in time for the reception, but I expect they will be late.  
C. There were four in our group.  
D. Let's meet at Lucy's house, and remember to bring the soft drinks and popcorn.
  
3. A. Mr. Smith, along with all of his students, took his place in the auditorium.  
B. The girls arrived late and left early; they only intended to make a brief appearance.  
C. It is important to spend time studying, however, rest and recreation are also important.  
D. The prosecution presented its case so well that it would be a surprise for the jury to return a verdict of not guilty.
  
4. A. This position requires speaking, writing, and supervising skills.  
B. The conversation took place in her office, which was cluttered with papers and books.  
C. The activity is brisk in the living room and in the kitchen while people are searching for a place to sit.  
D. This is not what I requested the color is too dark, and it's the wrong size.
  
5. A. After searching through a loose-leaf binder of old homework assignments, he finally found the notes he was searching for, and he began his intense study marathon.  
B. The student entered the professor's office cautiously, and he wondered if the professor--especially someone so distinguished as to be the department head--could have any understanding of the stress students face.  
C. Then she would be calm.  
D. She looked at the cat again, who had been watching her, and the bird, which was chirping outside the window.

6. A. He took the elevator up to the ninth floor; he was just in time for his appointment.  
B. She waited a minute before dialing the phone, still wondering if she was making the right decision.  
C. The child's mother looked at him disapprovingly; he was wet, and his new clothes were covered in mud.  
D. Because there was a policy that only students of the school could check out books from the library.
7. A. Jane watched for a moment, and then went back to work.  
B. The teacher, having prepared the class for their exam.  
C. She stood up and put on her jacket and hat.  
D. Mary, sitting on the edge of her chair, watched to see the champion baton twirler's fire and knife performance.
8. A. He looked old; his hair and beard were gray.  
B. Because the only one in the room besides her was an old gentleman with a fragile hand placed on each knee, whose eyes were closed as if he were asleep or dead or meditating.  
C. Next to the young girl was the boy, still sleeping in the chair, and next to him was an older man, constantly watching the clock.  
D. I like the way Judge Smith runs the courtroom; she has no trouble keeping order.
9. A. His teaching position paid well; nevertheless, his graduate school tuition was a great financial strain.  
B. Please don't ask me to read I didn't bring my glasses.  
C. We sang until midnight.  
D. She had the correct answer.
10. A. Not wanting to appear overly ambitious.  
B. Learning to play a musical instrument takes a great deal of time and patience.  
C. All of the books on the list appealed to him, but he knew he would only have time to read two during the trip.  
D. This is an important presentation for anyone interested in the field.

## Answers

- 1.A
- 2.A
- 3.C
- 4.D
- 5.C
- 6.D
- 7.B
- 8.B
- 9.B
- 10.A

For more practice on Sentence Fragments and Run-On Sentences, see

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag01/frag01.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag02/frag02.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag03/frag03.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag04/frag04.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag05/frag05.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag06/frag06.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/frag07/frag07.htm>

# Appendix B: Verbs

## VERB TENSES

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/tenses.html#present>

In English, there are three basic tenses: present, past, and future. Each has a perfect form, indicating completed action; each has a progressive form, indicating ongoing action; and each has a perfect progressive form, indicating ongoing action that will be completed at some definite time. Here is a list of examples of these tenses and their definitions:

	Simple Forms	Progressive Forms	Perfect Forms	Perfect Progressive Forms
<b>Present</b>	play(s) take(s)	am/is/are playing, taking	have/has played, taken	have/has been playing, taking
<b>Past</b>	played, took	was/were playing, taking	had played, taken	had been playing, taking
<b>Future</b>	will/shall play, take	will be playing, taking	will have played, taken	will have been playing taking

### Simple Forms

#### Present Tense

Present tense expresses an unchanging, repeated, or reoccurring action or situation that exists only now. It can also represent a widespread truth.

Example	Meaning
The mountains <u>are</u> tall and white.	Unchanging action
Every year, the school council <u>elects</u> new members.	Recurring action
Pb <u>is</u> the chemical symbol for lead.	Widespread truth

## Past Tense

Past tense expresses an action or situation that was started and finished in the past. Most past tense verbs end in **-ed**. The irregular verbs have **special past tense forms** which must be memorized.

Example	Form
W.W.II <u>ended</u> in 1945.	Regular -ed past
Ernest Hemmingway <u>wrote</u> "The Old Man and the Sea."	Irregular form

## Future Tense

Future tense expresses an action or situation that will occur in the future. This tense is formed by using **will/shall** with the **simple form** of the verb.

The President will finish his term in January of 2017.

The future tense can also be expressed by using **am, is, or are** with **going to**.

The surgeon is going to perform the first bypass in Minnesota.

We can also use the **present tense form with an adverb** or adverbial phrase to show future time.

The president speaks tomorrow. (Tomorrow is a future time adverb.)

## Progressive Forms

### Present Progressive Tense

Present progressive tense describes an ongoing action that is happening at the same time the statement is written. This tense is formed by using **am/is/are** with the verb form ending in **-ing**.

The sociologist is examining the effects that racial discrimination has on society.

### Past Progressive Tense

Past progressive tense describes a past action which was happening when another action occurred. This tense is formed by using **was/were** with the verb form ending in **-ing**.

The explorer was explaining the latest discovery in Egypt when protests began on the streets.

## Future Progressive Tense

Future progressive tense describes an ongoing or continuous action that will take place in the future. This tense is formed by using **will be** or **shall be** with the verb form ending in **-ing**.

Dr. Jones will be presenting ongoing research on sexist language next week.

## Perfect Forms

### Present Perfect Tense

Present perfect tense describes an action that happened at an indefinite time in the past or that began in the past and continues in the present. This tense is formed by using **has/have** with the **past participle** of the verb. Most past participles end in **-ed**. Irregular verbs have **special past participles** that must be memorized.

Example	Meaning
The researchers <u>have traveled</u> to many countries in order to collect more significant data.	At an indefinite time
Women <u>have voted</u> in presidential elections since 1921.	Continues in the present

### Past Perfect Tense

Past perfect tense describes an action that took place in the past before another past action. This tense is formed by using **had** with the **past participle** of the verb.

By the time the troops arrived, the war had ended.

### Future Perfect Tense

Future perfect tense describes an action that will occur in the future before some other action. This tense is formed by using **will have** with the **past participle** of the verb.

By the time the troops arrive, the combat group will have spent several weeks waiting.



## Perfect Progressive Forms

### Present Perfect Progressive

Present perfect progressive tense describes an action that began in the past, continues in the present, and may continue into the future. This tense is formed by using **has/have been** and the **present participle** of the verb (the verb form ending in **-ing**).

The CEO has been considering a transfer to the state of Texas where profits would be larger.

### Past Perfect Progressive

Past perfect progressive tense describes a past, ongoing action that was completed before some other past action. This tense is formed by using **had been** and the **present perfect** of the verb (the verb form ending in **-ing**).

Before the budget cuts, the students had been participating in many extracurricular activities.

### Future Perfect Progressive

Future perfect progressive tense describes a future, ongoing action that will occur before some specified future time. This tense is formed by using **will have been** and the **present participle** of the verb (the verb form ending in **-ing**).

By the year 2020, linguists will have been studying and defining the Indo-European language family for more than 200 years.

## Exercise 1

Complete the following sentence with the correct verb tense.

1. Andy is tired because he (work) \_\_\_\_\_ all day.
2. By 1960 most of Britain's old colonies (become) \_\_\_\_\_ independent.
3. David broke his leg when he (ski) \_\_\_\_\_ last week.
4. (you/have) \_\_\_\_\_ a nice time in Rome?
5. (you/finish) \_\_\_\_\_ your homework yet?
6. He (be) \_\_\_\_\_ at his computer for six hours.
7. How long (she/have) \_\_\_\_\_ that car?
8. How many people (die) \_\_\_\_\_ in the fire yesterday?
9. I (not/know) \_\_\_\_\_ much about art, but I like some artists.
10. I (wait) \_\_\_\_\_ for ages when finally the bus arrived.
11. I (receive) \_\_\_\_\_ a postcard from Jane yesterday.
12. I (correct) \_\_\_\_\_ papers all morning. I'm exhausted.
13. I (never/be) \_\_\_\_\_. What's it like?
14. It was late. Most of the stores (close) \_\_\_\_\_.
15. It (rain) \_\_\_\_\_ when I got up this morning.
16. Janet (start) \_\_\_\_\_ a new job in September.
17. Nelly (have) \_\_\_\_\_ a great time in New York at the moment.
18. She was cooking dinner when we (arrive) \_\_\_\_\_.
19. She (just/come) \_\_\_\_\_ back from a Mediterranean cruise.
20. My husband (be) \_\_\_\_\_ free for most of the afternoon.
21. The children were tired because they (swim) \_\_\_\_\_ in the pool all afternoon.
22. They (go) \_\_\_\_\_ to spend six weeks in Europe.
23. We can use the car. I (repair) \_\_\_\_\_ it.
24. We were tired because we (be) \_\_\_\_\_ to a party the night before.
25. We (be) \_\_\_\_\_ too late for the train as it had just left.
26. When I got to the airport I realized I (forget) \_\_\_\_\_ my passport.
27. As soon as they (arrive) \_\_\_\_\_, we had dinner.
28. When they were driving home last night, they (see) \_\_\_\_\_ a terrible accident.
29. Where (Robert/live) \_\_\_\_\_ now?
30. Who (Mandy/talk) \_\_\_\_\_ to?

## Answers

1. has been working
2. had become
3. was skiing
4. Did you have
5. Have you finished
6. has been
7. has she had
8. died
9. don't know
10. had been waiting
11. received
12. have been correcting
13. have never been
14. had closed
15. was raining
16. is starting
17. is having
18. arrived
19. has just come
20. is
21. been swimming
22. are going
23. have repaired
24. had been
25. were
26. had forgotten
27. arrived
28. saw
29. does Robert live or is Robert living
30. is Mandy talking

**Exercise 2** <http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisetenseconsistency.htm>

**In the space below each sentence, write the correct tense of the verb in parentheses to create tense consistency. In some cases you may need to add an auxiliary verb.**

1. As soon as she saw the smoke, Laura (run) into the house to save her dog.
2. Jenn (throw) out the food that had been sitting in the refrigerator for weeks.
3. When you get here, the valet (show) you to your room.
4. Will returned the book and (get) a receipt from the clerk.
5. By the time we arrived on the scene, the cars (tow) away.
6. Real estate prices have increased dramatically over the past year; I should (buy) that property months ago.
7. The horse (race) across the finish line as we are speaking.
8. Bill saw the movie a week after he (read) the book.
9. Lulu (take) ballet for three years now.
10. By the time you finish this project, we (grow) very old.

## Answers

1. As soon as she saw the smoke, Laura **ran** into the house to save her dog.
2. Jenn threw out the food that **had been sitting** in the refrigerator for weeks.
3. When you get here, the valet **will show** you to your room.
4. Will returned the book and **got** a receipt from the clerk.
5. By the time we arrived on the scene, the cars **had been towed** away.
6. Real estate prices have increased dramatically over the past year; I **should have bought** that property months ago.
7. The horse **is racing** across the finish line as we are speaking.
8. Bill saw the movie a week after he **had read** the book.
9. Lulu **has taken** ballet for three years now.
10. By the time you finish this project, we **will have grown** very old.

**Exercise 3** <http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisetenseconsistency2.htm>

In the space below each sentence, write the correct tense of the verb in parentheses to create tense consistency. In some cases you may need to add an auxiliary verb.

1. The weather service predicts that it **(get)** cold in a week.
2. The outer rings of the disc cracked after the center **(dry)** out from age.
3. We will discuss other conditions that usually **(cause)** joint pain at the next meeting.
4. The child found out painfully that fire **(burn)**.
5. The students **(work)** on their projects as we are speaking.
6. In Dickens' novel, David's stepfather sends him to London, where every day David **(work)** in a warehouse.
7. This morning the boxer met the opponent who **(beat)** him three months earlier.
8. By next Thursday, he **(talk)** to the assembly twice.
9. Her brother **(keep)** a diary for over ten years now.
10. Later, after the lecture is over, we **(meet)** at the train station.

## Answers

1. The weather service predicts that it **will get** cold in a week.
2. The outer rings of the disc cracked after the center **had dried** out from age.
3. We will discuss other conditions that usually **cause** joint pain at the next meeting.
4. The child found out painfully that fire **burns**.
5. The students **are working** on their projects as we are speaking.
6. In Dickens' novel, David's stepfather sends him to London, where every day David **works** in a warehouse.
7. This morning the boxer met the opponent who **had beaten** him three months earlier.
8. By next Thursday, he **will have talked** to the assembly twice.
9. Her brother **has kept** a diary for over ten years now.
10. Later, after the lecture is over, we **will meet** at the train station.

**Exercise 4** <http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisetenseconsistency3.htm>

In the space below each sentence, write the correct tense of the verb in parentheses to create tense consistency. In some cases you may need to add an auxiliary verb.

1. After Shelley pulled a muscle, her leg (**ache**) all week.
  
2. If you eat all of your vegetables, you (**grow**) strong.
  
3. The heron flies high and then (**dip**) into the lake.
  
4. Maybelle picked out the red dress; however, she (**choose**) the green one for that occasion.
  
5. He has defeated all who (**challenge**) his title.
  
6. When Juan got to the hospital, he friend (**leave**).
  
7. I (**do**) the assignment after you call me this morning.
  
8. By the time the sun rises tomorrow, we (**create**) seven new websites.
  
9. Lightning (**strike**) that building twice since we have lived here.
  
10. You may jump into the pool if you (**learn**) how to swim.



## Answers

1. After Shelley pulled a muscle, her leg **ached** all week.
2. If you eat all of your vegetables, you **will grow** strong.
3. The heron flies high and then **dips** into the lake.
4. Maybelle picked out the red dress; however, she **should have chosen** the green one for that occasion.
5. He has defeated all who **have challenged** his title.
6. When Juan got to the hospital, he friend **had already left**.
7. I **will do** the assignment after you call me this morning.
8. By the time the sun rises tomorrow, we **will have created** seven new websites.
9. Lightening **has struck** that building twice since we have lived here.
10. You may jump into the pool if you **have learned** how to swim.

For more practice with verb tenses, see

<http://www.chompchomp.com/irregular01/irregular01.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/irregular02/irregular02.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/irregular03/irregular03.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/irregular04/irregular04.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/irregular05/irregular05.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/irregular06/irregular06.htm>

## Sequence of Tense

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/sequence.htm>

Understanding the sequence of tenses will help you do many things:

1. It helps you explain what someone else said (indirect quotations)
2. It helps you with conditional sentences (using the word "if")
3. It helps you make sentences using the word "wish"

Here are some examples:

Someone says, "I need to go to the store."  
She said that she needed to go to the store.

You change "need" to "needed" but the situation is still in the present. This is a strange thing about English, but many Americans do this properly without thinking about it.

Here's another example:

If you could meet me at the airport, I would be grateful.

In this situation, "can" changes to "could." Why? Because "if" is present and the sentence is conditional.

Here's an example using "wish":

I wish I had been at the party last night.

This sentence indicates that something did not happen in the past, but it uses the past perfect to express it. Confused? Take a look at the chart below and then go on to the next section.

**Original Tense** → **Changed to....**

Present → Past

Present Continuous → Past Continuous

Past → Past Perfect

Present Perfect → Past Perfect

will → would

can → could

may → might

Although the various shades of time and sequence are usually conveyed adequately in informal speech and writing, especially by native speakers and writers, they can create havoc in academic writing and they sometimes are troublesome among students for whom English is a second language. This difficulty is especially evident in complex sentences when there is a difference between the time expressed in an independent clause and the time expressed in a dependent clause. Another difficulty arises with the use of infinitives and participles, modals which also convey a sense of time. The tables below will provide the order necessary to help writers sort out tense sequences.

As long as the main clause's verb is in neither the past nor the past perfect tense, the verb of the subordinate clause can be in any tense that conveys meaning accurately. When the main clause verb is in the past or past perfect, however, the verb in the subordinate clause must be in the past or past perfect. The exception to this rule is when the subordinate clause expresses what is commonly known as a *general truth*:

- In the 1950s, English teachers still believed that a background in Latin ***is*** essential for an understanding of English.
- Columbus somehow knew that the world ***is*** round.
- Slave owners widely understood that literacy among oppressed people ***is*** a dangerous thing.

The tables below demonstrate the correct relationship of tenses between clauses where time is of the essence (i.e., within sentences used to convey ideas about actions or conditions that take place over time).

Tense in Independent Clause	Purpose of Dependent Clause/ Tense in Dependent Clause	Example(s)
<b>Simple Present</b>	To show same-time action, use the present tense	I <i>am</i> eager to go to the concert because I <i>love</i> the Wallflowers.
	To show earlier action, use past tense	I <i>know</i> that I <i>made</i> the right choice.
	To show a period of time extending from some point in the past to the present, use the present perfect tense.	They <i>believe</i> that <i>they have elected</i> the right candidate.
	To show action to come, use the future tense.	The President says that he <i>will veto</i> the bill.
<b>Simple Past</b>	To show another completed past action, use the past tense.	I <i>wanted</i> to go home because I <i>missed</i> my parents.
	To show an earlier action, use the past perfect tense.	She <i>knew</i> she <i>had made</i> the right choice.
	To state a general truth, use the present tense.	The Deists <i>believed</i> that the universe <i>is</i> like a giant clock.
<b>Present Perfect or Past Perfect</b>	For any purpose, use the past tense.	She <i>has grown</i> a foot since she <i>turned</i> nine. The crowd <i>had turned</i> nasty before the sheriff <i>returned</i> .
<b>Future</b>	To show action happening at the same time, use the present tense.	I <i>will be</i> so happy if they <i>fix</i> my car today.
	To show an earlier action, use the past tense.	You <i>will</i> surely <i>pass</i> this exam if you <i>studied</i> hard.
	To show future action <i>earlier than</i> the action of the independent clause, use the present perfect tense.	The college <i>will</i> probably <i>close</i> its doors next summer if enrollments <i>have not increased</i> .
<b>Future Perfect</b>	For any purpose, use the present tense or present perfect tense.	Most students <i>will have taken</i> sixty credits by the time they <i>graduate</i> . Most students <i>will have taken</i> sixty credits by the time they <i>have graduated</i> .

Like verbs, **infinitives and participles** are capable of conveying the idea of action in time; therefore, it is important that we observe the appropriate tense sequence when using these modals.

INFINITIVES		
Tense of Infinitive	Role of Infinitive	Example(s)
Present Infinitive (to see)	To show same-time action or action later than the verb	Coach Espinoza <i>is</i> eager <i>to try</i> out her new drills. [The eagerness is now; the trying out will happen later.]
		She <i>would have liked to see</i> more veterans returning. [The present infinitive <i>to see</i> is in the same time as the past <i>would have liked</i> .]
Perfect Infinitive (to have seen)	To show action earlier than the verb	The fans <i>would like to have seen</i> some improvement this year. ["Would like" describes a present condition; "to have seen" describes something prior to that time.]
		They <i>consider</i> the team <i>to have been coached</i> very well. [The perfect infinitive <i>to have been coached</i> indicates a time prior to the verb <i>consider</i> .]
Tense of Participle	Role of Participle	Example(s)
Present Participle (seeing)	To show action occurring at the same time as that of the verb	<i>Working</i> on the fundamentals, the team slowly <i>began</i> to improve. [The action expressed by <i>began</i> happened in the past, at the same time the <i>working</i> happened.]
Past Participle (seen) or Present Perfect Participle (having seen)	To show action occurring earlier than that of the verb	<i>Prepared</i> by last year's experience, the coach <i>knows</i> not to expect too much. [The action expressed by <i>knows</i> is in the present; <i>prepared</i> expresses a time prior to that time.]
		<i>Having experimented</i> with several game plans, the coaching staff <i>devised</i> a master strategy. [The present perfect participle <i>having experimented</i> indicates a time prior to the past tense verb, <i>devised</i> .]

## Exercise 1

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/22/49>

Check the following sentences for confusing shifts in tense. If the tense of each underlined verb expresses the time relationship accurately, write S (satisfactory). If a shift in tense is not appropriate, write U (unsatisfactory) and make necessary changes. In most cases with an inappropriate shift, there is more than one way to correct the inconsistency. Reading the sentences aloud will help you recognize differences in time.

- \_\_\_ 1. If the club limited its membership, it will have to raise its dues.
  
- \_\_\_ 2. While Barbara puts in her contact lenses, the telephone rang.
  
- \_\_\_ 3. Thousands of people will see the art exhibit by the time it closes.
  
- \_\_\_ 4. By the time negotiations began, many pessimists have expressed doubt about them.
  
- \_\_\_ 5. After Capt. James Cook visited Alaska on his third voyage, he is killed by Hawaiian islanders in 1779.
  
- \_\_\_ 6. I was terribly disappointed with my grade because I studied very hard.
  
- \_\_\_ 7. The moderator asks for questions as soon as the speaker has finished.
  
- \_\_\_ 8. Everyone hopes the plan would work.
  
- \_\_\_ 9. Harry wants to show his friends the photos he took last summer.
  
- \_\_\_ 10. Scientists predict that the sun will die in the distant future.
  
- \_\_\_ 11. The boy insisted that he has paid for the candy bars.
  
- \_\_\_ 12. The doctor suggested bed rest for the patient, who suffers from a bad cold.

## Answers

In most cases with an inappropriate shift below, there is more than one way to correct the inconsistency. Each suggested change is probably not the only correct one for the sentence.

Correct responses are in bold, and incorrect responses are in italics.

- U 1. If the club **limited** its membership, it *will* have to raise its dues. (change *will* to *would*)
- U 2. As Barbara *puts* in her contact lenses, the telephone **rang**. (change *puts* to *put*) OR As Barbara *puts* in her contact lenses, the telephone **rings**. (change *rang* to *rings* to illustrate ongoing action)
- S 3. Thousands of people **will see** the art exhibit by the time it **closes**.
- U 4. By the time negotiations **began**, many pessimists *have* expressed doubt about them. (change *have* to *had*)
- U 5. After Capt. James Cook **visited** Alaska on his third voyage, he *is* killed by Hawaiian islanders in 1779. (change *is* to *was*)
- U 6. I **was** terribly disappointed with my grade because I *studied* very hard. (change *studied* to *had studied*)
- S 7. The moderator *asks* for questions as soon as the speaker **has finished**. (*asks* as habitual action; *will ask* is also possible)
- U 8. Everyone *hopes* the plan **would work**. (change *hopes* to *hoped*)
- S 9. Harry **wants** to show his friends the photos he **took** last summer.
- S 10. Scientists **predict** that the sun **will die** in the distant future.
- U 11. The boy **insisted** that he *has* paid for the candy bars. (change *has* to *had*)
- U 12. The doctor **suggested** bed rest for the patient, who *suffers* from a bad cold. (change *suffers* to *was suffering*)

## Exercise 2

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/22/51>

In the following passage from Alex Haley's *Roots*, some of the verbs have been deliberately omitted. Supply the appropriate tense for each missing verb, the plain form of which is given in brackets.

In Banjul, the capital of Gambia, I met with a group of Gambians. They [tell] \_\_\_\_\_ me how for centuries the history of Africa has been preserved. In the older villages of the back country, there are old men called griots, who [be] \_\_\_\_\_ in effect living archives. Such men [memorize] \_\_\_\_\_ and, on special occasions, [recite] \_\_\_\_\_ the cumulative histories of clans or families or villages as those histories [have] \_\_\_\_\_ long been told. Since my forefather [have] \_\_\_\_\_ said his name was Kin-tay (properly spelled Kinte), and since the Kinte clan [be] \_\_\_\_\_ known in Gambia, the group of Gambians would see what they could do to help me. I was back in New York when a registered letter [arrive] \_\_\_\_\_ from Gambia.

Words [have] \_\_\_\_\_ been passed in the back country, and a griot of the Kinte clan [have], \_\_\_\_\_ indeed, been found. His name, the letter said, [be] \_\_\_\_\_ Kebba Kanga Fofana. I [return] \_\_\_\_\_ to Gambia and [organize] \_\_\_\_\_ a safari to locate him.

## Answers

In Banjul, the capital of Gambia, I met with a group of Gambians. They **told** me how for centuries the history of Africa has been preserved. In the older villages of the back country, there are old men called griots, who **are** in effect living archives. Such men **memorize** and, on special occasions, **recite** the cumulative histories of clans or families or villages as those histories **have** long been told. Since my forefather **had** said his name was Kin-tay (properly spelled Kinte), and since the Kinte clan **was** known in Gambia, the group of Gambians would see what they could do to help me. I was back in New York when a registered letter **arrived** from Gambia.

Word **had** been passed in the back country, and a griot of the Kinte clan **had**, indeed, been found. His name, the letter said, **was** Kebba Kanga Fofana. I **returned** to Gambia and **organized** a safari to locate him.



### Exercise 3

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/22/52>

**Although the main tense in the following paragraph is past, the writer correctly shifts to present tense twice. Find these two verbs in present tense. If you encounter difficulty, try reading the paragraph aloud.**

The Iroquois Indians of the Northeast regularly burned land to increase open space for agriculture. In fact, the early settlers of Boston found so few trees that they had to row out to the islands in the harbor to obtain fuel. Just how far north this practice extended is uncertain, but the Saco River in southern Maine appears to have been the original northern boundary of the agricultural clearings. Then, pressured by European settlement, the Iroquois extended their systematic burning far northward, even into the Maritime Provinces of Canada. (abridged from Hay and Farb, *The Atlantic Shore*)

**Read the following paragraph through, and determine the main tense. Then reread it and circle the three verbs that shift incorrectly from the main tense.**

For the past seven years, I have called myself a swimmer. Swimming, my one sport, provides a necessary outlet for my abundant energy. I have always drawn satisfaction from exertion, straining my muscles to their limits. I don't know why pushing forward in the water, as my muscles cried out in pain, sets off a booming cheer in my head. Many times when I rounded the turn for the last lap of a race, my complaining muscles want to downshift and idle to the finish. My mind, however, presses the pedal to the floor and yells, "FASTER!" The moment that I touched the wall my muscles relax; the pain subsides. I am pleased to have passed the point of conflict. (adapted from Brendon MacLean, "*Harder!*")

**You will notice several shifts in tense in the following paragraph describing action in a fictional narrative. Find the six faulty shifts in tense.**

In "The Use of Force" William Carlos Williams describes a struggle involving a doctor, two parents, and their young daughter. The doctor must obtain a throat culture from the girl, who was suspected of having diphtheria. This ordinarily simple task is hindered by the frightened and uncooperative patient, Mathilda Olson. Adding to the doctor's difficulties were the parents, who had to struggle with their own conflicting emotions. They want their daughter helped, but they did not trust the doctor to do the right thing. Sensitive to the parents' uncertainty, the doctor became more and more frustrated by Mathilda's resistance. Williams gives considerable attention to how each of the Olsons react, but it is clear that his main interest was in the doctor and his responses. (adapted from a student essay)

## Answers

In this first paragraph, the two verbs in present tense--both appropriate for the situation--are indicated in **bold**.

The Iroquois Indians of the Northeast regularly burned land to increase open space for agriculture. In fact, the early settlers of Boston found so few trees that they had to row out to the islands in the harbor to obtain fuel. Just how far north this practice extended **is** uncertain, but the Saco River in southern Maine **appears** to have been the original northern boundary of the agricultural clearings. Then, pressured by European settlement, the Iroquois extended their systematic burning far northward, even into the Maritime Provinces of Canada. (abridged from Hay and Farb, *The Atlantic Shore*)

The main tense in this next paragraph is **present**. Incorrect shifts to past tense are indicated in **bold**.

For the past seven years, I have called myself a swimmer. Swimming, my one sport, provides a necessary outlet for my abundant energy. I have always drawn satisfaction from exertion, straining my muscles to their limits. I don't know why pushing forward in the water, as my muscles **cried out** in pain, sets off a booming cheer in my head. Many times when I **rounded** the turn for the last lap of a race, my complaining muscles want to downshift and idle to the finish. My mind, however, presses the pedal to the floor and yells, "FASTER!" The moment that I **touch**ed the wall my muscles relax; the pain subsides. I am pleased to have passed the point of conflict. (adapted from Brendon MacLean, "*Harder!*")

Since the following paragraph describes action in a fictional narrative, the main tense should be **present**. The six incorrect shifts to past tense are underlined>.

In "The Use of Force" William Carlos Williams describes a struggle involving a doctor, two parents, and their young daughter. The doctor must obtain a throat culture from the girl, who **was** suspected of having diphtheria. This ordinarily simple task is hindered by the frightened and uncooperative patient, Mathilda Olson. Adding to the doctor's difficulties **were** the parents, who **had** to struggle with their own conflicting emotions. They want their daughter helped, but they **did** not trust the doctor to do the right thing. Sensitive to the parents' uncertainty, the doctor **became** more and more frustrated by Mathilda's resistance. Williams gives considerable attention to how each of the Olsons react, but it is clear that his main interest **was** in the doctor and his responses. (adapted from a student essay)

## Exercise 4

<http://www.uhv.edu/ac/grammar/pdf/tenseshifts.pdf>

**In the following two paragraphs, some of the sentences have unnecessary tense shifts. Correct the sentences by crossing out the offending verb forms and replacing them with appropriate forms. Here are some hints to help you out: determine what the primary tense or time frame of the story is, and then decide whether any events happened before the primary time frame and whether any continue into the present and choose appropriate verb forms to indicate those shifts.**

By the time Paul **arrived** at the house it **is** too late. The door **was** open, the light **was** on and his wife **has disappeared**. People **are** still walking home from work and the sidewalk in front of his house **pulsed** with a slow but steady stream of neighbors who **stared** at him as they **passed**. In the twilight the streetlamp's glow **casts** dim and surreal highlights on the odd assortment of objects in his yard, the treadmill and the ten potted plants **arranged** in alphabetical order on the front walk. Looking back furtively over his shoulder as he **folds** the treadmill and **secured** its dangling electrical cord, Paul **gives** the impression of some agitation as he **pushed** the machine through the door and into the foyer of his home. One of the pots **is** an inch and a half out of alignment. Sighing, he **nudged** it into place and **picked** up a leaf that **fell** when the pot **moved**.

Vincent Van Gogh **is** probably most well known in America for cutting off a large piece of his own ear with a razor in a fit of rage after a violent quarrel with Paul Gauguin with whom he **was sharing** a house at the time. While trying to establish an artists' colony in the South of France, Gauguin and Van Gogh **live** together in the "Yellow House" for several months, during which time their arguments over art **escalated** to the virulent stage. Van Gogh also **suffers** from manic depression, a serious mental illness characterized by dramatic mood swings from very high highs to very low lows. Unfortunately, the time of the quarrel with Gauguin **coincided** with one of Van Gogh's low periods, causing him to be almost prostrate with despair. Van Gogh **wrapped** the piece of ear in a sheet of newspaper and **gives** it to a local prostitute, an action that **causes** outrage among the local populace and **prompted** his brother Theo, with whom he **had** a very close relationship, to encourage Van Gogh to commit himself to an asylum. The flamboyance of the event **was** unfortunate in many ways, but primarily because it **became** the event most associated with the name of Van Gogh and **tended** to diminish the importance of his work in the eyes of many.

## Answers

By the time Paul **arrived** at the house it **was** too late. The door **was** open, the light **was** on and his wife **had disappeared**. People **were** still walking home from work and the sidewalk in front of his house **pulsed** with a slow but steady stream of neighbors who **stared** at him as they **passed**. In the twilight the streetlamp's glow **cast** dim and surreal highlights on the odd assortment of objects in his yard, the treadmill and the ten potted plants **arranged** in alphabetical order on the front walk. Looking back furtively over his shoulder as he **folded** the treadmill and **secured** its dangling electrical cord, Paul **gave** the impression of some agitation as he **pushed** the machine through the door and into the foyer of his home. One of the pots **was** an inch and a half out of alignment. Sighing, he **nudged** it into place and **picked** up a leaf that **had fallen** when the pot **moved**.

Vincent Van Gogh **is** probably most well known in America for cutting off a large piece of his own ear with a razor in a fit of rage after a violent quarrel with Paul Gauguin, with whom he **was sharing** a house at the time. While trying to establish an artists' colony in the South of France, Gauguin and Van Gogh **had lived** together in the "Yellow House" for several months, during which time their arguments over art **had escalated** to the virulent stage. Van Gogh also **suffered** from manic depression, a serious mental illness characterized by dramatic mood swings from very high highs to very low lows. Unfortunately, the time of the quarrel with Gauguin **coincided** with one of Van Gogh's low periods, causing him to be almost prostrate with despair. Van Gogh **wrapped** the piece of ear in a sheet of newspaper and **gave** it to a local prostitute, an action that **caused** outrage among the local populace and **prompted** his brother Theo, with whom he **had** a very close relationship, to encourage Van Gogh to commit himself to an asylum. The flamboyance of the event **was** unfortunate in many ways, but primarily because it **has become** the event most associated with the name of Van Gogh and **has tended** to diminish the importance of his work in the eyes of many.

**For more practice in sequence of tense, see**

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/chute.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseshifts1.htm>

## **Active and Passive Voice**

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/actpass.html>

Writers are often advised to use active verbs because they are more direct, more emphatic, and more concise than passive verbs. Passive verbs are necessary, however, when writers do not know the "doer" of the verb, the "doer" of the verb is not important, or there are too many "doers" of the same verb.

### **Active Verbs**

If the subject of a sentence "does" the verb (the action), then the verb is active. In the examples below, the subjects are in bold, and the verbs are in italics. Notice that the subjects are "doing" the action of the verbs.

- The company *enforces* two environmentally-friendly policies, carpooling and recycling.
- Americans *can reduce* their risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes by following the American Cancer Society's nutrition guidelines.
- Thomas Jefferson *drafted* the Declaration of Independence between June 11 and June 28, 1776; individuals from the thirteen united States of America *signed* it on July 4, 1776.

### **Passive Verbs**

If the subject receives the action of the verb, the verb is passive because the subject of the sentence is not "doing" the verb (the action). Passive verbs are often preceded by helping verbs (*is, am, are, were, was, been*) or followed with *by*. In the following examples, the subjects are in bold, and the verbs are in italics. Notice that the subjects in the sentences are not "doing" the action; they are receiving the action.

- Extensive research *is being done* to determine which gene in the body causes autism, a neurological disorder that usually strikes children within the first two years of their lives. (There are too many "doers" of the verb to mention.)
- The United Nations Charter *was signed* on June 26, 1945 by representatives of 50 countries. (The "doers" of the verb are less important than the object receiving the action.)
- In 1955, Rosa Parks, an African-American seamstress, *was arrested* in Montgomery, Alabama for refusing to give her bus seat to a white passenger. (The "doer" of the verb is not known.)

Although writers are often encouraged to use active voice, in some fields (especially the sciences) and in some instances (those mentioned at the top of this page), passive voice is acceptable and may even be preferred.

## Exercise 1

[http://www.englishdaily626.com/passive\\_voice.php?002](http://www.englishdaily626.com/passive_voice.php?002)

**Choose the correct verb form.**

1. A party \_\_\_\_\_ to celebrate their victory.  
(A) had held  
(B) holds  
(C) was held  
(D) was to hold
  
2. What questions \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ at the interview?  
(A) were ... asking  
(B) were ... asked  
(C) are ... being asked  
(D) have ... ask
  
3. A book on archaeology \_\_\_\_\_ by the famous professor.  
(A) wrote  
(B) has written  
(C) was written  
(D) writes
  
4. You \_\_\_\_\_ to the manager's office.  
(A) have taken  
(B) will take  
(C) will be taking  
(D) will
  
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ an invitation to a party.  
(A) am giving  
(B) have been given  
(C) have given  
(D) will give

6. \_\_\_\_\_ the room \_\_\_\_\_ yet ?
- (A) Is ... cleaning
  - (B) Has ... cleaned
  - (C) Has
  - (D) Was ... cleans
7. These curtains and cushion covers \_\_\_\_\_ by my mother.
- (A) have sewn
  - (B) is sewing
  - (C) had been sewn
  - (D) can sew
8. All the figures and calculations \_\_\_\_\_ thoroughly.
- (A) should check
  - (B) should be checking
  - (C) should have checked
  - (D) should be checked
9. A joke \_\_\_\_\_ seriously.
- (A) is not taken
  - (B) is not to take
  - (C) is not to be taken
  - (D) is not taking
10. These books \_\_\_\_\_ to us by the teacher.
- (A) recommended
  - (B) were recommended
  - (C) have recommended
  - (D) was being recommended

**Answers :** 1C 2B 3C 4D 5B 6C 7C 8D 9C 10B

## Exercise 2

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseact-pass2.htm>

Change each passive voice sentence into the active voice.

1. A piece of plastic had been swallowed by the child.
2. Two separate people were given rides in the new models by the designer.
3. Our dog is frightened by loud thunderstorms.
4. The store was kept open until 11:00 p.m. by the overtired workers.
5. The ball is hit straight into the bleachers by the batter.
6. New insecticides are produced each year by chemical companies.
7. The old shed was painted bright blue by the man's son.
8. Resources for the project were not included in the budget by the legislature.
9. The vibrant colors in the painting are immediately noticed by museum goers.
10. The story is presented in a dispassionate way by the author.



## Answers

1. The child had swallowed a piece of plastic.
2. The designer gave two separate people rides in the new models.
3. Loud thunderstorms frighten our dog.
4. The overtired workers kept the store open until 11:00 p.m.
5. The batter hits the ball straight into the bleachers.
6. Chemical companies produce new insecticides each year.
7. The man's son painted the old shed bright blue.
8. The legislature did not include in the budget resources for the project.
9. Museum goers immediately notice the vibrant colors in the painting.
10. The author presents the story in a dispassionate way.

### Exercise 3

Rewrite the following paragraphs in active voice. <http://www.ballard-tighe.com/carouselweb/unit8.pdf>

1. There are many people who don't know how to save time while word processing. For example, the copy/paste function can be used to move paragraphs from one place to another so that they don't have to be rewritten. There is an indent/outdent button that will indent paragraphs so that each line does not have to be tabbed.

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2. An old house was bought by my family. The wood cabinets were broken. Therefore, a carpenter was needed. A plumber also was needed to fix the sink. In addition, the electrical wiring needed to be repaired by an electrician. Unfortunately, much money is not what my family has. However, good jobs are held by my father and mother. Money made by my brother, who is a newspaper delivery person, also helps my family make ends meet. And money also is made by my sister who is a waitress. Therefore, hope is something we have lots of for a bright future in our house.

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3. Before the Industrial Revolution, all textiles—clothing, carpets, tents, blankets, curtains, tablecloths, and upholstery—were manufactured by hand. Then, in 1767, the first spinning Jenny was built by James Hargreaves. After that, cotton yarn could be manufactured in great quantities. In 1769, the Spinning Frame, which spun yarn of a sturdier quality than the spinning Jenny, was invented by Richard Arkwright. In 1779, the spinning mule, which created a more elegant cotton thread than the spinning Jenny could, was created by Samuel Crompton. Within a few years, a variety of other types of textile machines were invented by other gifted entrepreneurs. In 1793, a machine that would clean the seeds out of green cotton was built by Eli Whitney. Now, massive amounts of cotton could be processed in a short time. This period of rapid mechanical invention was called the Industrial Revolution.

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4. Having cash registers full of change was found to increase the likelihood of a late-night robbery. In one example, a store clerk was held up at gunpoint. It was decided by management that requiring full payment for gasoline in advance of a purchase would minimize the risk of further holdups. This course of action had been voted on by the board of directors prior to implementation. The decision was posted at each location. Following implementation, it was discovered that holdups were not minimized unless large signs indicating the clerk's lack of available cash were placed in plain view. Once this was done, fewer holdups were experienced, and the turnover of late-night personnel was decreased. (Adapted from: Anson, Chris. *The Longman Handbook for Readers and Writers*.)

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## Answers

1. Many people don't know how to save time while word-processing. For example, they can use the copy/paste function to move paragraphs from one place to another so they don't have to rewrite them. They can use the indent/outdent button to indent paragraphs so that they don't have to tab them.
2. My family bought an old house. We needed a carpenter to fix the broken wood cabinets. We also needed a plumber to fix the sink. In addition, we needed an electrician to repair the electrical wiring. Unfortunately, my family doesn't have much money. However, my father and mother hold good jobs. My brother, who is a news newspaper delivery person, also helps my family make ends meet. And my sister, who is a waitress, also makes money. Therefore, we have lots of hope for a bright future in our house.
3. Before the Industrial Revolution, people manufactured all textiles—clothing, carpets, tents, blankets, curtains, tablecloths, and upholstery—by hand. Then, in 1767, James Hargreaves built the first spinning Jenny. After that, people could manufacture cotton yarn in great quantities. In 1769, Richard Arkwright invented the Spinning Frame, which spun yarn of a sturdier quality than the spinning Jenny. In 1779, Samuel Crompton created the spinning mule, which created a more elegant cotton thread than the spinning Jenny could. Within a few years, other gifted entrepreneurs invented a variety of other types of textile machines. In 1793, Eli Whitney built a machine that would clean the seeds out of green cotton. Now, people could process massive amounts of cotton in a short time. We call this period of rapid mechanical invention the Industrial Revolution.
4. Managers found the likelihood of a late-night robbery increased by having cash registers full of change. In one example, a robber held up a store clerk at gunpoint. Management decided that requiring full payment for gasoline in advance of a purchase would minimize the risk of further holdups. The board of directors had voted on this course of action prior to implementation. Each location posted the decision. Following implementation, managers discovered that they did not minimize holdups unless they placed large signs indicating the clerk's lack of available cash in plain view. Once they did this, they experienced fewer holdups, and they decreased the turnover of late-night personnel.

For more practice on active and passive voice, see

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseAct-Pass.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseact-pass2.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseact-pass3.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseact-pass4.htm>

[http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises\\_list/passiv.htm](http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/passiv.htm)

<http://www.e-grammar.org/passive-voice/>

[http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/verbs-voice\\_quiz.htm](http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/verbs-voice_quiz.htm)

## AGREEMENT OF SUBJECT AND VERB

[http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Subject\\_Verb\\_Agreement\\_Handout.pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Subject_Verb_Agreement_Handout.pdf)

Verbs can change form in tense, person, and number. The subject and verb of every clause (independent or dependent), however, must agree in person and number. Once you identify the subject and the verb, you can then determine such agreement of the subject and the verb.

There are three persons:

First person- the speaker  
Second person-the person spoken to  
Third person- the person spoken about

There are two numbers:

Singular- denoting one person or thing  
Plural- denoting more than one person or thing

Nouns ending in *s* are usually plural.

Verbs ending in *s* are singular.

Singular subjects should be paired with singular verbs and plural subjects should be paired with plural verbs.

she walks  
the book is  
they want  
Bill, John, and Jane go

Study the following rules for subject/verb agreement

### 1. Compound Subjects

Compound subjects joined by *and* normally require a plural verb:

Hard work and persistence are required in all rewarding accomplishments.  
Where are the pens and paper?

Subjects which include at least two nouns or pronouns connected by *and* should be paired with plural verbs.

the manager and the employees are  
the cats and the dog run  
the man and the woman are

## 2. Subjects Joined by *Or* or *Nor*

When two or more subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the subject part closest to the verb. This also applies to *either/or* and *neither/nor*.

the professor or her students write  
the students or their professor writes  
the boy or the girl walks

## 3. Intervening Expressions

Modifying phrases or clauses that come between the subject and the verb do not change the number of the verb. The number of the verb is determined entirely by the number of the subject:

The assignment, which they submitted to their professor, was incomplete.  
[Assignment is the subject of the verb *was*].

The new computer classroom, with its many work stations and its sophisticated technology, fills [not fill] a long-felt need.  
[*Computer classroom* is the subject of the verb *fills*; the phrase *with its many work stations...* has nothing to do with the verb.]

## 4. Verb Preceding the Subject

It is possible for a verb to come before a subject in a sentence. The rules of agreement between the subject and the verb remain the same despite the change in order.

There is in many cities a desire to reduce traffic and pollution. [*Desire* is the subject of the verb *is*.]

There are a stapler, two pens, four books, and a writing tablet on the desk.  
[*Stapler, pens, books* and *writing tablet* are the subjects of the verb *are*.]

Where are *Joan and her daughters* going? [Joan and her daughters are subjects of the verb *are going*.]

## 5. Indefinite Pronouns

The indefinite pronouns or adjectives *either*, *neither*, and *each*, as well as compounds such as *everybody*, *anybody*, *everyone*, and *anyone* are always singular. *None* may be singular or plural. The plural usage is more common.

Each of the cars has its insurance proof in the glove compartment.

Everyone at the meeting was upset over the policies announced.

Every employee, supervisor, and executive reveals the operation of a model company.

Is either of you ready for lunch?

None of the employees have brought their children to the company dinner.

None of the students is interested in the research project.

None--no, not one--is planning to attend the retreat.

## 6. **Subjects Plural in Form**

Singular verbs are usually used with nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning.

The following nouns are usually singular in meaning: *news, economics, ethics, physics, mathematics, gallows, mumps, measles, shambles, whereabouts.*

a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is...  
physics is a difficult course...  
statistics is...  
politics is...  
athletics seems...

Nouns such as *gymnastics, tactics, trousers, scissors, athletics, tidings, acoustics, riches, and barracks* are usually treated as plural.

His tactics are sneaky.  
The scissors are on the table.  
The trousers are hanging in the closet.

Plural nouns denoting a mass, a quantity, or a number require a singular verb when the subject is regarded as a unit.

Five dollars is too much for her to pay.  
Fifty bushels was all the bin would hold.

Though usage is mixed, phrases involving addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division of numbers usually take the singular form.

Two plus two is four.  
Two times three is six.  
Twelve divided by six is two.

In expressions like *part of the apple, some of the pie, all of the money, the number of part, some, and all* is determined by the number of the noun in the prepositional phrase.

Some of the pie has been eaten.  
Some of the pies have been eaten.

## 7. **The subject of some form of *To Be***

When one noun precedes and another follows some form of the verb *to be*, the first noun is the subject, and the verb agrees with it and not with the complement even if the complement is different in number.

The only food remaining is mashed potatoes.  
Mashed potatoes are the only food remaining.

[In the first sentence, *food* is the subject; in the second, *mashed potatoes*.]

## 8. Relative Pronoun as Subject

When a relative pronoun (*who*, *which*, or *that*) is used as the subject of a clause, the number and person of the verb are determined by the antecedent of the pronoun, the word to which the pronoun refers.

This is the professor who is to be hired. [The antecedent of *who* is the singular noun *professor*; therefore, *who* is singular.]

These are the employees who are to be working tomorrow. [The antecedent of *who* is the plural noun *employees*.]

Should I, who am not a student at the school, be allowed to take the class? [*Who* refers to *I*; *I* is first person, singular number.]

She is one of those tough professors who are always expecting the best from students. [The antecedent of *who* is *professors*.]

If sentences such as the last one give you trouble, try beginning the sentence with the "of" phrase, and you will readily see that the antecedent of *who* is persons and not one.

Of those tough professors who are always expecting the best from students, she is one.

## 9. Collective Nouns

Some nouns are singular in form but plural in meaning. They are called collective nouns and include such words as *team*, *class*, *committee*, *crowd*, and *crew*. These nouns may take either a singular or plural verb; if you are thinking of the group as a unit, use a singular verb; if you are thinking of the individual members of the group, use a plural verb.

When referring to a group as a single unit, a singular verb is used.

The public is...

The family is...

The class is demanding...

When referring to a group's members as individuals, a plural verb is used.

The committee fight among themselves.

The student body are talking with each other.

The class are writing.

## 10. Nouns with Foreign Plurals

Some nouns retain the plural forms peculiar to the languages from which they have been borrowed: *alumni*, *media*, *crisis*. Still other nouns occur with either their original plural forms or plural forms typical of English: *aquaria* or *aquariums*, *criteria* or *criteria*. If you are in doubt as to the correct or preferred plural form of a noun, consult a good dictionary.

Note: Be careful not to use a plural form when you refer to a singular idea. For instance He is an *alumnus* [not *alumni*] of this school.



## Exercise 1

Mark the appropriate verb choice for each of the following sentences.

1. The noisy students (have, has) to leave after two warnings.
2. She is the only one of the students who (have, has) failed the test.
3. The crying baby (irritate, irritates) them.
4. The longest of the presentations (is, are) the next group.
5. The students and their teacher (is, are) traveling to the competition.
6. Either one of the choices (is, are) going to disrupt the schedule.
7. This is the stereo system that (have, has) been purchased most often in our store.
8. Nobody (dare, dares) to challenge the teacher when she is wrong.
9. The players or their coach (is, are) holding a press conference.
10. Neither of the students (has, have) been to Europe.
11. The problems (was, were) due to a misunderstanding.
12. Which (is, are) more interesting, the red jackets or the blue sweaters?
13. (Has, Have) the manager or the assistant manager approached you?
14. Joan, as well as my sister, (is, are) in college now.
15. Several of the students (has, have) left.
16. Both of the children (has, have) red notebooks.
17. One of the best known love stories (is, are) *Romeo and Juliet*.
18. Mathematics (is, are) very difficult for many students to master.
19. She is one of the girls who (have, has) long hair.
20. She or her sisters (is, are) going.

**Answers:**

1. have

2. has

3. irritates

4. is

5. are

6. is

7. has

8. dares

9. is

10. has

11. were

12. are

13. has

14. is

15. have

16. have

17. is

18. is

19. have

20. are

## Exercise 2

Mark the appropriate verb choice for each of the following sentences.

1. Each of the exercises (take, takes) about twenty minutes to complete.
2. The ladies and the child (is, are) planning to have pizza for lunch.
3. The teacher, along with her students, (is, are) determined to have a good year.
4. Please tell me when John and Mary (go, goes) to the store.
5. The class (watch, watches) a movie every Friday night.
6. The number of issues (seem, seems) to be increasing.
7. The husband and his wife (drive, drives) a convertible.
8. Hardly anyone (speak, speaks) to her.
9. He or his sister (want, wants) to visit Europe next summer.
10. She (take, takes) her dog for a walk each evening.
11. The brother and sister (want, wants) to visit their aunt and uncle.
12. The high school senior, along with his parents, (is, are) upset over the sudden policy change.
13. The songs they sing (stay, stays) in my mind all day.
14. Ten dollars (is, are) too much to charge for such a small item.
15. She and her mother (talk, talks) on the phone almost every day.
16. The blue ones (seem, seems) to match best.
17. Teenagers and their parents (see, sees) things very differently.
18. She, against her aunt's wishes, (have, has) decided to go skiing instead.
19. When the two of them (go, goes) together, they always have fun.
20. He and his girlfriend (love, loves) to go camping.

## Answers

1. takes

2. are

3. is

4. go

5. watches

6. seems

7. drive

8. speaks

9. wants

10. takes

11. want

12. is

13. stay

14. is

15. talk

16. seem

17. see

18. has

19. go

20. love

### Exercise 3

**Circle the correct form of the verb tense and indicate the rule that determines the correct answer.**

- \_\_\_ 1. Formal trousers (is, are) required for this dinner party.
- \_\_\_ 2. Her friend and mentor (were, was) one of her college professors.
- \_\_\_ 3. Neither a dog nor a cat (offer, offers) the same companionship as another person.
- \_\_\_ 4. On the other side of the street (are, is) a restaurant and a clothing store.
- \_\_\_ 5. In the back seat of his car (was, were) three books and his briefcase.
- \_\_\_ 6. Three hours (are, is) not going to be enough time to travel that distance.
- \_\_\_ 7. The pressure of academic life can sometimes (tempt, tempts) students to cheat.
- \_\_\_ 8. Everyone in the group (was, were) supposed to meet at the front gate at 7:00.
- \_\_\_ 9. Each of these books (was, were) useful in my grammar review.
- \_\_\_ 10. The professor, along with many of his students, (is, are) preparing for the end of the semester.
- \_\_\_ 11. I don't think either of these cars (are, is) reliable enough for a long road trip.
- \_\_\_ 12. The criteria for passing the exam (are, is) becoming more difficult.
- \_\_\_ 13. (Are, Is) Lois or Kate your choice for the promotion?
- \_\_\_ 14. Algebra and geometry (is, are) the only math courses being offered this semester.
- \_\_\_ 15. Athletics (have, has) been a matter of increasing interest among women.
- \_\_\_ 16. Every one of the guests (have, has) had an opportunity to wish the couple well.
- \_\_\_ 17. The results of the latest standardized exams (indicate, indicates) an increase in standards at the school.
- \_\_\_ 18. According to the newspaper, there (were, was) three main suspects questioned.
- \_\_\_ 19. (Have, Has) the spring training programs begun yet?
- \_\_\_ 20. My favorite literature to read (are, is) modern American poetry.

## **Answers**

1. (6) are
2. (1) was
3. (2) offers
4. (4) are
5. (4) were
6. (6) is
7. (3) tempt
8. (5) was
9. (5) was
- 10.(3) is
- 11.(2) is
- 12.(10) are
13. (4) Is
14. (1) are
15. (6) has
16. (5) has
17. (3) indicate
18. (4) were
19. (4) have
20. (3) is

## Exercise 4

**Circle the correct form of the verb tense and indicate the rule that determines the correct answer.**

- \_\_\_ 1. I am certain that both Catherine and Lucy (is, are) coming to visit this weekend.
- \_\_\_ 2. The scissors (is, are) kept in the top desk drawer.
- \_\_\_ 3. Neither the twins nor their older brother (have, has) ever seen snow.
- \_\_\_ 4. Some of the fruit (have, has) already begun to ripen.
- \_\_\_ 5. The news reported by the president of the college (are, is) considered bad by most people.
- \_\_\_ 6. The media (are, is) planning elaborate coverage of the event.
- \_\_\_ 7. Neither of my neighbors (invite, invites) me over very often.
- \_\_\_ 8. My aunt, as well as all of my cousins, (have, has) been sick this past week.
- \_\_\_ 9. Over twelve gallons of gas (are, is) used each week because of our commute to work.
- \_\_\_ 10. How much (is, are) twenty times fourteen?
- \_\_\_ 11. He is one of the professors who (attract, attracts) a large number of students.
- \_\_\_ 12. The major concern, which is why we changed our plans, (are, is) the children.
- \_\_\_ 13. Most of the school corridors, which are extremely old, (are, is) in need of paint.
- \_\_\_ 14. When the rain begins to fall harder, every swimmer (are, is) told get out of the water.
- \_\_\_ 15. One hundred dollars (is, are) being offered for information about the crimes.
- \_\_\_ 16. Their high pressure sales tactics (is, are) resented by many people.
- \_\_\_ 17. The phenomenon that surprised many people (were, was) explained by the leading scientist in the field.
- \_\_\_ 18. None of the Southern states (have, has) ever experienced much snow.
- \_\_\_ 19. There (are, is) very strict criteria for passing the exam.
- \_\_\_ 20. The commercial states that every product they sell (are, is) superior to their main competitor's products.

## Answers

1. (1) are
2. (6) are
3. (2) has
4. (6) has
5. (6) is
6. (10) are
7. (5) invites
8. (3) has
9. (6) is
- 10.(6) is
- 11.(8) attract
- 12.(3) is
13. (3) are
14. (5) are
15. (6) is
16. (6) are
17. (3) was
18. (5) have
19. (10) are
20. (5) is



## Exercise 5

Select the sentence that has an error in subject verb agreement.

1. A. Both Christine and Heather have published their stories in major journals.  
B. Neither student has the assignment completed.  
C. The problems take them all evening to complete.  
D. He is one of the students who has taken the exam.
2. A. He and his girlfriend talk on the phone constantly.  
B. Neither she nor her mother wants to go to the dinner.  
C. The professor or one of her research assistants is at every meeting.  
D. The longest of the meetings are the first one of the semester.
3. A. The young couple has a new home in a beautiful neighborhood.  
B. Either the professor or his students have prepared the grant submission.  
C. Has an instructor or one of the lab assistants come to help you?  
D. Neither the students nor their professor are going to the meeting.
4. A. The jury are taking their seats in the courtroom now.  
B. The number of students are increasing.  
C. Each of her daughters has developed a unique style.  
D. Neither Suzi nor her sister has been able to find the missing earring.
5. A. There seem to be a growing interest in that class.  
B. Either the students or their parents have spoken to the board.  
C. When all of the tests are finished, the scientists will have more information.  
D. Everyone except the lead suspect has given a statement to the police.
6. A. Two books, a pen, a steno tablet, and some candy was found in the briefcase.  
B. Someone in the class or Sara critiques each presentation.  
C. The child's demands irritate the parents.  
D. Each of the students wears a white shirt with blue pants.
7. A. Each of the applicants completes an entrance exam, which requires an essay.  
B. Every member of the chorus was complemented on the production.  
C. The children, the mother, and the father were there supporting the team.  
D. There has been problems with the outdated policy.
8. A. The time the classes are offered have made it difficult for many students.  
B. The worker's tasks have not been neglected.  
C. Dr. Jones, as well as Ms. Griffin, attends the conference every year.  
D. One of the members has not returned from the recess.
9. A. The new system of taking messages have helped our response time tremendously.  
B. Neither one of the children has agreed to come to the meeting.  
C. The student, as well as her parents, was pleased with the grade report.  
D. Either the student or his parents have collected his books.
10. A. Neither John nor his sisters has completed an information form.  
B. A book, a pen, and paper were on the desk.  
C. Either the student or one of the panel members respond to each question.  
D. The committee debate the issues among themselves after each open session.

## **Answers**

1.D

2.D

3.D

4.B

5.A

6.A

7.D

8.A

9.A

10.D

**For more practice on Subject/Verb Agreement, see**

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/sva01.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/sva02.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/sva03.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/sva04.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/sva05.htm>

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/exercisesub-verb.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisesub-verb2.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisesub-verb3.htm>

## Appendix C: Pronouns

[http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Pronoun\\_and\\_Antecedent\\_Agreement.pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Pronoun_and_Antecedent_Agreement.pdf)

**Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. The antecedent of a pronoun is the word to which the pronoun refers. The pronoun and its antecedent agree in gender and number.**

*Jane* called *her* friend. *Jane* and *her* are both singular and feminine.

*John* called *his* friend. *John* and *his* are both singular and masculine.

The *girls* finished *their* job. The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.

The *boys* finished *their* job. The plural pronoun agrees with the plural antecedent.

The pronoun is masculine (he, his, him) when the antecedent is masculine, and feminine (she, her, hers) when the antecedent is feminine, and neutral (it, its) when the antecedent has no gender association.

**A plural pronoun should be used with a compound antecedent joined by *and*.**

*Mary and Bill* ran until *they* were exhausted.

**A singular pronoun is used to refer to two or more singular antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*. A plural pronoun is used with two or more plural antecedents joined by *or* or *nor*.**

*Ben or Tom* will give *his* presentation today.

Either the *juniors or the seniors* are singing *their* class song.

**When a singular antecedent and a plural antecedent are joined by *or* or *nor*, use a pronoun that agrees with the nearer antecedent.**

The boy or his *parents* will present *their* idea.

The parents or the *boy* will present *his* idea.

**Use a singular pronoun when a collective noun refers to a group as a single unit. Use a plural pronoun when the collective noun refers to a group's members as individuals.**

The *class* decided *it* wanted to do the project.

The *class* stayed in *their* desks.

**Use singular pronouns to refer to indefinite pronouns (words like *everybody*, *none*, *nobody*, *someone*) used as antecedents.**

*Each* of the boys had *his* assignment ready.

*Everyone* on the women's team improved *her* time.

*Everybody* on the committee had *his or her* own agenda.

**Use the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *which*, and *that* with the appropriate antecedents.**

***Who*** refers to people and animals that have names.

*He* is the one *who* committed the crime.

***Which*** refers to animals and things.

The biology *book*, *which* is on the table, was very helpful.

***That*** refers to animals, things and sometimes to people.

The *house that* is on the right is being demolished.

## Exercise 1

Circle the correct form of the pronoun.

1. Jane and Sarah said (she, they) were too tired to skate any longer.
2. Either Bill or John will bring a sample of (his, their) own work.
3. Jane and Jill called (her, their) friend.
4. Either Jane or her friends will present (her, their) project.
5. Neither Mary nor Susan said (she, they) would be there.
6. Every student wants to impress (his or her, their) professors.
7. Both John and Jim said (he, they) were not exercising regularly.
8. The jury were asked to return to (its, their) seats.
9. Please remind each student to bring (his or her, their) homework tomorrow.
10. Neither John nor Bob was willing to admit that (he, they) had cheated.
11. Each of the girls had (her, their) assignment completed.
12. Every worker in this office needs (his or her, their) own computer.
13. The committee finally made (its, their) decision public.
14. Nobody remembered to bring (his or her, their) photos.
15. Neither girl will wear (her, their) black pants.
16. Beth and Jane reported the problem to (her, their) supervisor.
17. Each teacher turned in (his or her, their) grades to the principal.
18. The choir presented (its, their) final performance.
19. Either the employees or Ms. Jones will make (their, her) presentation.
20. Both Suzi and Beth will try to see (her, their) parents over the weekend.

## Answers

1. they

2. his

3. their

4. their

5. she

6. his or her

7. they

8. their

9. his or her

10. he

11. her

12. his or her

13. its

14. his or her

15. her

16. their

17. his or her

18. its

19. her

20. their

## Exercise 2

Select the sentence that is incorrect in each group.

1. A. Each of the students should bring his or her text book to the study session.  
B. Both Christine and George brought their children with them to the meeting.  
C. Everyone wanted to share their observations.  
D. When people are interrogated relentlessly, they tend to grow weary.
  
2. A. John and Jane are combining their money to purchase a larger gift for their parents.  
B. Neither Steve nor Gary wanted to present his own ideas.  
C. Sandy was the only one in the class who had his or her homework.  
D. If anyone wants the tickets, they need to call me tonight.
  
3. A. The members of the team played their hardest.  
B. Bob is one of those teachers who consider themselves privileged to work with students.  
C. The tour guide, as well as the entire group, checked their supply list.  
D. Either my sister or my cousin will bring her video camera.
  
4. A. Everyone should write their name on the top of their test.  
B. If students need help, they should make an appointment to meet with a tutor.  
C. Neither of them will wear her costume once the performance is over.  
D. Both girls will try to see their relatives in New York.
  
5. A. Nobody in the class completed his or her assignment perfectly.  
B. The students, rather than the professor, will present their theory at the conference.  
C. Every instructor and every administrator stated his or her opinion.  
D. The committee is making their final presentation this evening.
  
6. A. The group of student workers are distributing the schedule which was developed.  
B. The principal, as well as the teachers, initiated his request for parental help.  
C. Every employee must wear his or her identification badge.  
D. The mother and the father explained their concern.

7. A. Many of them will see their friends at the conference.  
B. The students, as well as the principal, expressed their opposition to the board's decision.  
C. John, rather than Dianne or Phil, brought his design for the poster.  
D. Either Sally or Christine will present their congratulations to the winner.
8. A. If anyone objects to the decision, they should say so now.  
B. Everyone was quiet until he or she heard the speaker's controversial remark.  
C. The audience showed their boredom by moving around during the presentation.  
D. She is the type of student who tries his or her hardest.
9. A. Nobody thought about bringing his or her portfolio.  
B. Neither Ruth nor Betty was late for her appointment.  
C. Anyone who thinks the task seems easy should try it themselves.  
D. Both Ann and Sarah asked if they could turn her assignment in late.
10. A. Joan, as well as both of her sisters, wanted to complete her assignment over the weekend.  
B. Someone has forgotten to complete their registration form.  
C. Neither Greg nor his brothers remembered their password.  
D. David and Sarah, as well as John, filed their complaint.

## Answers

- 1.C  
2.D  
3.B  
4.A  
5.D  
6.A  
7.D  
8.A  
9.C  
10.B

### Exercise 3

<http://www.daltonstate.edu/writing-lab/index.html>

**Directions: Choose the correct pronoun in the following sentences.**

1. Each of the suspects had (his, their) own alibi.
2. Jeff and Isabel planned (his and her, their) wedding.
3. Did Bill or George announce (his, their) intent to run for president?
4. Neither the nails nor the hammer was returned to (its, their) proper place.
5. Everyone turned in (his or her, their) drama reviews in advance of the due date.
6. All of the students turned in (his or her, their) research papers on time.
7. If any one of the students has misplaced (his or her, their) lunch ticket, (he or she, they) can ask for a replacement from the Ms. Ima Hungry, the lunch lady.
8. The state of Florida does not treat (its, their) public employees fairly.
9. Both of the women have made (her, their) opinions known.
10. Every one of the actresses knows (her, their) part by heart.
11. Either my brother or sisters will reveal (his and their, their) plans at the family reunion.
12. After the victory, the winning and the losing captains thanked (his, their) team members for effort beyond the call of duty.
13. Before the guests began arriving, Sally asked Tim whether everything was in (its, their) place.
14. Neither of the candidates wore clothing suitable for (his or her, their) interview.
15. Every teacher must turn in (his or her, their) grades by December 18.



## Answers

1. his
2. their
3. his
4. its
5. his or her
6. their
7. his or her; he or she
8. its
9. their
10. her
11. their
12. their
13. its
14. his or her
15. his or her

For more practice on Pronoun Antecedent Agreement, see

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/proagree01.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/proagree02.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/proagree03.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/proagree04.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/proagree05.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisep-aagr.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisep-aagr.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisep-aagr3.htm>

# Appendix D: Punctuation and Mechanics

## APOSTROPHE

[http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Apostrophe\\_Handout.pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Apostrophe_Handout.pdf)

Apostrophes have three main uses:

1. To indicate possession
2. To indicate an omission of letters or numbers
3. To separate the **s** from plural letters/numbers and abbreviations followed by periods.

**Apostrophes are always used with possessive nouns.**

Singular nouns are followed by an **'s**.

Chris**'s** poem  
boy**'s** room  
director**'s** desk

Plural nouns which end in **"s"** are followed by an apostrophe.

girls**'** shoes  
Jones**'** house  
dancers**'** dressing room

Plural nouns which do not end in **"s"** are followed by an **'s**.

children**'s** school  
mice**'s** maze  
women**'s** group

Do not use apostrophes with possessive pronouns (my, your, their, her, its, yours, theirs, ours, hers, his, etc.)

their room  
our home  
its paw

**Contractions always require apostrophes to indicate the omission of letters.**

it is = it's  
was not = wasn't  
he is = he's  
1999 = '99

**Apostrophes are used to separate the s from plural letters, numbers and abbreviations followed by a title.**

She made three **A's**.  
My phone number has four **2's**.  
One of the **Ph.D.'s** came forward first in the commencement.

## Exercise 1

**Add apostrophes where appropriate in the following sentences. Some of the sentences are correct. If no apostrophes are needed, mark the sentence "correct".**

1. The kitten slept on the childs bed.
2. The Smiths children were all good singers.
3. He made three As for the semester.
4. Shell start college next semester.
5. Shes determined to make all As.
6. The mother picked up the childrens toys
7. The girls wanted to play basketball.
8. Theres no substitute for good preparation.
9. Theyre wondering if the boys car is in his driveway.
10. His testimony was that he hadnt been there since the summer of 89.
11. Shes willing to go, but theyve already left.
12. All of the students parents would be arriving throughout the day.
13. One of the M.D.s got into a debate with one of the Ph.D.s.
14. The boys finished their homework early so that they could watch the game.
15. She found the street, but couldnt remember if the address had two 3s or three 2s.
16. You could hear the mices squeaks from the condemned kitchen.
17. I would have borrowed Janes book, but hers was an older version.
18. The womens restroom is to the right.
19. Tom and Bill have both said theyll be there.
20. Im not going unless youre coming.
21. Its getting late, and I havent finished my homework yet.
22. She mistakenly thought Joans book was hers.
23. Johns novel is based on his parents experience of immigrating to the United States.
24. Theyre eager to go ahead and announce their decision.
25. The childrens room was painted in bright reds, yellows, and blues.

## Answers

1. The kitten slept on the child's bed.
2. The Smiths' children were all good singers.
3. He made three A's for the semester.
4. She'll start college next semester.
5. She's determined to make all As.
6. The mother picked up the children's toys
7. The girls wanted to play basketball. correct
8. There's no substitute for good preparation.
9. They're wondering if the boy's car is in his driveway.
10. His testimony was that he hadn't been there since the summer of '89.
11. She's willing to go, but they've already left.
12. All of the students' parents would be arriving throughout the day.
13. One of the M.D.'s got into a debate with one of the Ph.D.s.
14. The boys finished their homework early so that they could watch the game. correct
15. She found the street, but couldn't remember if the address had two 3's or three 2's.
16. You could hear the mice's squeaks from the condemned kitchen.
17. I would have borrowed Jane's book, but hers was an older version.
18. The women's restroom is to the right.
19. Tom and Bill have both said they'll be there.
20. I'm not going unless you're coming.
21. It's getting late, and I haven't finished my homework yet.
22. She mistakenly thought Joan's book was hers.
23. John's novel is based on his parents' experience of immigrating to the United States.
24. They're eager to go ahead and announce their decision.
25. The children's room was painted in bright reds, yellows, and blues.

For additional practice on apostrophes, see

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/3/3/10>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseapos.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseapos2.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseapos3.htm>

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseapos4.htm>

[http://depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/exercises/apostrophes\\_ex1.htm](http://depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/exercises/apostrophes_ex1.htm)

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/apostrophes01.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/apostrophes02.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/apostrophes03.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/apostrophes04.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/apostrophes05.htm>

## CAPITALIZATION

Charles Dowling, Capital Community College

Capitalize the **first word** of every sentence — unless that sentence is in parentheses incorporated within another sentence.

**G**lacial till or debris (some geologists call this material “garbage”) is often deposited in formations called *morains*.

Capitalize the personal pronoun *I*.

Capitalize the **names of family relations** when they are used as **substitutes** for names:

I went to visit my **U**ncle Ted and **A**unt Margaret.  
**G**randma and **G**randpa live with **D**ad and **M**om now.

**But:** I went with my mom and dad to visit my aunt and uncle. *Notice the role of the modifying pronoun here.*

In titles, capitalize the **first, last**, and all **important** words. Usually, we don't capitalize articles, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions.

In the **L**ake of the **W**oods  
**W**ar and **P**eace  
**I** Know **T**his **M**uch Is **T**rue

Capitalize names of **specific** persons, places, and geographical locations.

My brother **C**harlie, who used to live in the **M**iddle **E**ast and write books about the **O**ld **W**est, now lives in **H**artford, **C**onnecticut.

**But don't capitalize directions.**

They moved up north, to the southern shore of Lake Erie.

Capitalize names of **days of the week, months**, and **holidays**.

**C**hristmas **D**ay, which is always on **D**ecember 25, falls on **T**uesday this year.

**But don't capitalize the names of seasons.**

Next fall, before the **w**inter storms begin, we're heading south.

Capitalize the names of **historical events**.

The **B**attle of the **B**ulge was an important event in **W**orld **W**ar II.  
The **R**eformation took place in the sixteenth century.

Capitalize the names of **religions** and **religious terms**.

**God, Christ, Allah, Buddha, Christianity, Christians, Judaism, Jews, Islam, Muslims**

Capitalize the names of **nations, nationalities, languages**, and words based on such words.

**Somalia, Swedish, English muffin, Irish stew, Japanese maple, Jew's harp, French horn**

**But we usually don't capitalize "white" and "black."**

There are very few blacks in this predominantly white community.

Capitalize the names of **academic courses** when they're used as **titles**.

He took **C**hemistry 101, but he did much better in his economics and English literature courses.

Capitalize **Brand** names . . . .

**Ford, Kleenex, Levi's** (not jeans), xerox on a **X**erox copier, **Advil** (but aspirin)

Capitalize **titles** when they precede names.

Dean Arrington introduced **P**resident Carter to **S**ecretary Bogglesworth.

**But usually not after a name..**

Joe Chuckles, who was chairman of the board of directors in 1995, has since retired.

## Exercise 2

[http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Capitalization\(1\).pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Capitalization(1).pdf)

**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.
11. sincerely yours,
12. the marching band from the university of texas will perform in the thanksgiving day parade.
13. uncle bob and aunt jane never manage to stay awake until midnight on new year's eve.
14. the faculty of department of english will host a reception this friday.
15. we saw the musical *cats* on braodway while we were in new york.
16. charles' birthday is august 12, and his aunt sarah's birthday is august 25.
17. robert smith, m.d. established his practice in houston, texas last spring.
18. may i accompany you on your visit with the senator in june?
19. my french professor is dr. a. m. sullivan.
20. jamaica is my favorite carribean vacation destination.
21. she received her ph.d. in psychology from harvard university last spring.
22. she decided to attend southwest texas state university and major in elementary education.
23. john, my mother, and my aunt attended a production of shakespeare's *romeo and juliet* last weekend.
24. sandy loves music; she attends symphony performances at jones hall as often as she can.
25. dr. arons, dean of the college of education, will speak at the symposium this spring.

## Answers

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.
11. Sincerely yours,
12. The marching band from the University of Texas will perform in the Thanksgiving Day parade.
13. Uncle Bob and aunt Jane never manage to stay awake until midnight on New Year's Eve.
14. The faculty of Department of English will host a reception this Friday.
15. We saw the musical *Cats* on Broadway while we were in New York.
16. Charles' birthday is August 12, and his aunt Sarah's birthday is August 25.
17. Robert Smith, M.D. established his practice in Houston, Texas last spring.
18. May I accompany you on your visit with the senator in June?
19. My French professor is Dr. A. M. Sullivan.
20. Jamaica is my favorite Caribbean vacation destination.
21. She received her Ph.D. in psychology from Harvard University last spring.
22. She decided to attend Southwest Texas State University and major in elementary education.
23. John, my mother, and my aunt attended a production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* last weekend.
24. Sandy loves music; she attends symphony performances at Jones Hall as often as she can.
25. Dr. Arons, Dean of the College of Education, will speak at the symposium this spring.

For more practice on Capitalization, see

<http://www.learnenglishfeelgood.com/writing-capitalization-practice-test1.html>

<http://www.learnenglishfeelgood.com/writing-capitalization-practice-test2.html>

<http://www.learnenglishfeelgood.com/writing-capitalization-practice-test3.html>

<http://www.quia.com/mc/3522.html>

[http://cctc2.comnet.edu/sensen/part1/six/caps\\_app1.html](http://cctc2.comnet.edu/sensen/part1/six/caps_app1.html)

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/Quiz-301-305-Capitalization.htm>

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/Quiz-306-310-Capitalization.htm>

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/Quiz-311-315-Capitalization.htm>

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/Quiz-316-320-Capitalization.htm>

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/Quiz-321-325-Capitalization.htm>

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/Quiz-326-330-Capitalization-Review.htm>



## COMMAS

[http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Using\\_the\\_Comma.pdf](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Using_the_Comma.pdf)

Use commas to separate **three** or more items in a **series**.

He is taking biology, English, history, and music.

Their options were going to a movie, going to Astroworld, or going to the beach.

Eggs, muffins, toast, and cereal were available for breakfast.

Use commas before a **coordinating** conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) that combines sentences.

I didn't return her call last night, for it was too late when I got home.

She forgot her homework, and she wasn't prepared for the test.

She didn't want to stay very late, nor did she want to walk home alone.

He wanted to be on time for work, but he forgot to set his alarm.

You may stay and complete your assignment now, or you may finish the work at home.

They wanted to attend the presentation, yet they hadn't registered.

Their first choice was not available, so they were given their second choice.

Use commas to set off **introductory** phrases and clauses.

When I study, I have to have a quiet place with good lighting.

If you get anxious, try imagining yourself in a peaceful setting.

Although she wanted to go, she knew she would be in trouble if she got caught.

Use commas to set off **nonessential** elements (those which are not essential to the meaning of the sentence).

The movie, which was too long, had unrealistic characters and a poorly developed plot.

The child, who was lost in the store, was crying for her mother.

The car, which had been through an accident, required tremendous repair.

Use commas to separate **two** or more **coordinate adjectives** that describe the **same noun**.

The curious, enthusiastic child scurried through the kitchen.

The new student was a serious, dedicated scholar.

The old, dilapidated building was finally renovated.

Use commas to separate aspects of **geographical** names, **dates** (except between the month and day), **addresses** (except between the street number and street name), and **titles** in names.

She was born on July 7, 1958, in London, England.

Suzi Smith, MD., has an office at 101 Main Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Please deliver this to David Jones, Ph.D., 301 University Boulevard, Galveston, Texas.

Use commas to separate the **main discourse** in a **quotation**.

"Don't stay gone long," she insisted, "or I will be worried." "By the time you get back," he explained, "we will have left."

She stomped her feet and yelled, "Why can't I go?"

Use commas to separate **sharply contrasted** elements.

He went to school, not home.

She bought a skirt, not pants.

They saw Jane, not Mike.

Use commas to prevent possible **confusion** or **misreading**.

Above, the stars showed more brightly than ever.

To Anne, Beth had been a true friend and mentor.

With them, he never felt like he belonged.

### Exercise 3

Place commas where appropriate in the following sentences. Some of the sentences are correct. If no commas are needed, mark the sentence "correct".

1. The grocery store which is on Main Street is just two blocks from my house.
2. We took food bug spray and a blanket to the picnic.
3. My classes meet on Monday Wednesday and Friday of each week.
4. Without warning the storm worsened and the electricity failed.
5. In the winter I like to sit by the fireplace and drink hot chocolate.
6. He yelled "I don't want to go!"
7. Silk cotton and rayon are popular clothing fabrics.
8. He said he could hear the children who were laughing in the park.
9. The twins were born on January 4 1980 in Helsinki Finland.
10. In the summer we have a two week vacation and go swimming as often as we can.
11. Finally when the rain stopped we were able to leave.
12. "Please hold" the secretary said "while I transfer you to Ms. Adams."
13. She said she was with Jane not John.
14. Above the clouds looked like white cotton balls.
15. The dog will come home when he is tired and hungry.
16. January 4 1939 is his birthday and he wanted to celebrate in Paris France.
17. The committee wanted to meet again and the manager thought it was a good idea.
18. "When we enter the library" the teacher cautioned "you must speak in very quiet voices."
19. I knew he wouldn't be available to speak on the phone so I e-mailed him.
20. "Make sure you help clean up" Mother reminded us "so that you will be invited back."

## Answers

1. The grocery store, which is on Main Street, is just two blocks from my house.
2. We took food, bug spray, and a blanket to the picnic.
3. My classes meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week.
4. Without warning, the storm worsened and the electricity failed.
5. In the winter, I like to sit by the fireplace and drink hot chocolate.
6. He yelled, "I don't want to go!"
7. Silk, cotton, and rayon are popular clothing fabrics.
8. He said he could hear the children who were laughing in the park. **correct**
9. The twins were born on January 4, 1980, in Helsinki Finland.
10. In the summer, we have a two week vacation and go swimming as often as we can.
11. Finally, when the rain stopped, we were able to leave.
12. "Please hold," the secretary said, "while I transfer you to Ms. Adams."
13. She said she was with Jane, not John.
14. Above, the clouds looked like white cotton balls.
15. The dog will come home when he is tired and hungry. **correct**
16. January 4, 1939 is his birthday, and he wanted to celebrate in Paris, France.
17. The committee wanted to meet again, and the manager thought it was a good idea.
18. "When we enter the library," the teacher cautioned, "you must speak in very quiet voices."
19. I knew he wouldn't be available to speak on the phone, so I e-mailed him.
20. "Make sure you help clean up," Mother reminded us, "so that you will be invited back."

#### Exercise 4

Place commas where appropriate in the following sentences. If no commas are needed, mark the sentence "correct".

1. No I hadn't planned on going.
2. They had to vacuum the carpet mop the floors and dust the furniture before they left.
3. They knew they would be in trouble if they got caught sneaking in so late.
4. When they have to leave town I take care of their pets.
5. Betty has the book not Beth.
6. She was born in St. Petersburg Florida on October 9 1986 just two days after my little sister.
7. She said she would love to come to dinner and she wants to bring the desert.
8. "Where are you going?" she asked.
9. Before class I always make sure my pencil is sharpened and that I have plenty of blank paper.
10. My aunt who is a lawyer revels in accepting the impossible cases.
11. "Does it matter" he asked "which one of us wins?"
12. I wanted to see a basketball game walk through the park and watch the play.
13. Below there was a line for your signature.
14. The large red notebook belongs to the teacher.
15. She reminded us to sign the attendance sheet so that we would receive credit for being there.
16. She bought bananas apples and oranges.
17. She said we may go but we have to come directly home afterwards.
18. A small green calendar was left on the desk.
19. Finally she passed her certification exam.
20. The video was terrible so we cut it off early.

## Answers

1. No, I hadn't planned on going.
2. They had to vacuum the carpet, mop the floors, and dust the furniture before they left.
3. They knew they would be in trouble if they got caught sneaking in so late. **correct**
4. When they have to leave town, I take care of their pets.
5. Betty has the book, not Beth.
6. She was born in St. Petersburg, Florida on October 9, 1986, just two days after my little sister.
7. She said she would love to come to dinner, and she wants to bring the desert.
8. "Where are you going?" she asked. **correct**
9. Before class, I always make sure my pencil is sharpened and that I have plenty of blank paper.
10. My aunt, who is a lawyer, revels in accepting the impossible cases.
11. "Does it matter," he asked, "which one of us wins?"
12. I wanted to see a basketball game, walk through the park, and watch the play.
13. Below, there was a line for your signature.
14. The large, red notebook belongs to the teacher.
15. She reminded us to sign the attendance sheet so that we would receive credit for being there. **correct**
16. She bought bananas, apples, and oranges.
17. She said we may go, but we have to come directly home afterwards.
18. A small, green calendar was left on the desk.
19. Finally, she passed her certification exam.
20. The video was terrible, so we cut it off early.

For more practice on commas, see

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/commas01.htm>  
<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/commas02.htm>  
<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/commas03a.htm>  
<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/commas04a.htm>  
<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/commas05a.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecomma.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecomma2.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecomma3.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecomma4.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommasDATESaddress.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommasDATESaddress2.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommasDATESaddress3.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommaINTERRUPT.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommaINTERRUPT2.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommaINTERRUPT3.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommaINTRO.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommaINTRO2.htm>  
<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exercisecommaINTRO3.htm>

## Appendix E: Commonly Confused Words

Homonyms are words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings. The following table lists words that people commonly confuse. Become familiar with these words so you can be ready to correct homonym-related spelling errors. It's also a good idea to pay attention to the words you most commonly confuse; you may even keep a running list of these words as you prepare for the COMPASS. A more complete list can be found in Appendix A on page

Word	Example Sentences
accept except	My insurance will <u>accept</u> the charges for the accident. I like all vegetables, <u>except</u> for asparagus.
affect effect	Changing the way you eat will <u>affect</u> your health. I can't see what <u>effect</u> these new laws will have on me.
board bored	We put a <u>board</u> on the roof to fix the leak. I am so <u>bored</u> because there's nothing to do!
brake break	Always keep your foot above the <u>brake</u> ! My dad is worried my mom will <u>break</u> our new television.
close clothes	When you leave the room, always <u>close</u> the door. I want to go shopping to buy new <u>clothes</u> .
desert dessert	I thought you guys were going to <u>desert</u> me! The cherry pie looks so good for <u>dessert</u> !
ensure insure	John wants to <u>ensure</u> he will graduate next semester. Mary will <u>insure</u> her new car.
fare fair	I didn't have money for the bus <u>fare</u> this morning. It was only <u>fair</u> that the bus driver kicked me off the bus.
forth fourth	I'm not sure I can go <u>forth</u> with the plan. Allen was so proud to come in <u>fourth</u> in the pie-eating contest!
grate great	We need to <u>grate</u> some cheese to put on the pizza. If it has enough cheese, it will be a <u>great</u> pizza!
hear here	The volume was turned down so low I couldn't <u>hear</u> it. Could you please bring the beef jerky over <u>here</u> ?

hole whole	If I eat one more doughnut <u>hole</u> , I will be stuffed. I looked through the <u>whole</u> house, but I couldn't find my umbrella.
know no	I really have to <u>know</u> a lot to do well on my history test. I am going to study until I have <u>no</u> time left.
led lead	The dog <u>led</u> the police to the drug stash. Pens are okay, but I prefer old-fashioned <u>lead</u> pencils.
lessen lesson	The doctor gave me some stretches to do to <u>lessen</u> the pain. I'm not sure if he's learned his <u>lesson</u> yet.
lose loose	I'm trying hard to not lose patience with her. The knot might not hold, since it's sort of loose.
male mail	The kennel had both <u>male</u> and female puppies for sale. I'm going to the post office to send my <u>mail</u> .
passed past	I kept getting <u>passed</u> on the interstate today. In the <u>past</u> , I drove a lot faster.
peace piece	We all wish for world <u>peace</u> . A <u>piece</u> of pie would be great right now.
principal principle	My high school <u>principal</u> gave pretty good advice. I don't want to compromise my <u>principles</u> .
than then	I am tanner <u>than</u> she. We were both on the beach, but <u>then</u> she went inside.
there their they're	You can put your shoes over <u>there</u> . <u>Their</u> shoes were dirty, so they left them outside. <u>They're</u> just walking around barefoot right now.
to too two	I am going <u>to</u> the mall. Jesse said she wants to go <u>too</u> . We are each looking for <u>two</u> new outfits.
weather whether	The <u>weather</u> tomorrow is supposed to be beautiful. I don't know <u>whether</u> to go for a hike or a swim.
whose who's	<u>Whose</u> scarf is this? <u>Who's</u> going to the movie with us?
your you're	<u>Your</u> dog is bigger than my dog. <u>You're</u> going to have to keep him on a leash.



**Exercise 1** <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/confusibles.htm>

Select one answer from the choices provided after each sentence. The word you choose should fit the blank in the sentence.

1. I couldn't tell \_\_\_\_\_ she was serious or not.  
(a) whether  
(b) weather
2. \_\_\_\_\_ are too many possible answers to this question.  
(a) They're  
(b) There  
(c) Their
3. \_\_\_\_\_ going to help me with this?  
(a) Whose  
(b) Who's
4. Reading that book had a peculiar \_\_\_\_\_ on Evelyn.  
(a) effect  
(b) affect
5. I am completely \_\_\_\_\_ in this course.  
(a) uninterested  
(b) disinterested
6. I'm afraid she's going to \_\_\_\_\_ her grandmother's wedding band.  
(a) loose  
(b) lose
7. My mother has been \_\_\_\_\_ in bed all morning.  
(a) laying  
(b) lying
8. She has apparently found it difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ the circumstances.  
(a) accept  
(b) except
9. She apparently doesn't care about \_\_\_\_\_ origins in antiquity.  
(a) it's  
(b) its
10. It's usually hotter \_\_\_\_\_ this in July.  
(a) than  
(b) then
11. The politicians can't seem to find an appropriate \_\_\_\_\_ for the new community college.  
(a) sight  
(b) site
12. I've never known the library to be \_\_\_\_\_ this quiet.  
(a) quite  
(b) quiet

**Answers:**

1.a 2.b 3.b 4.a 5.a 6.b 7.b 8.a 9.b 10.a 11.b 12.a

**Exercise 2** <http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/Materials/ndakota/spelling/exercise1.html>

**Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the correct word.**

1. I will not be able to \_\_\_\_\_ the new job. (accept, except)
2. Please try not to \_\_\_\_\_ your new sunglasses. (lose, loose)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ going to the races this evening. (Their, They're)
4. How does candy \_\_\_\_\_ your blood sugar? (affect, effect)
5. We had \_\_\_\_\_ much snow last winter. (to, too, two)
6. She \_\_\_\_\_ the capitals of every state. (new, knew)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ car is parked in the driveway? (Who's, Whose)
8. April is the \_\_\_\_\_ month. (forth, fourth)
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ ingredients of bread are flour, water, and yeast. (principal, principle)
10. I would \_\_\_\_\_ all parents to have a dog. (advice, advise)
11. The students were convinced their teacher was \_\_\_\_\_ them with way too much homework. (persecuting/prosecuting)
12. One of the assignments was to create a \_\_\_\_\_ of all the books the students had read during the school year. (bibliography/biography)
13. The teacher's goal was to help the students \_\_\_\_\_ good study habits. (adopt/adapt)
14. The students, on the other hand, had a \_\_\_\_\_ objective: they wanted less homework and longer summer vacations. (duel/dual)
15. The teacher promised that the in-class essay she assigned would have no \_\_\_\_\_ on the students' final grades. (affect/effect)
16. In an attempt to convince the teacher to change the assignment, the students argued that they had \_\_\_\_\_ done enough in-class writing for the week. (all ready/already)
17. The teacher smiled and told the students to take a deep \_\_\_\_\_ and begin their writing assignment. (breath/breathe)
18. The students decided to stop resisting the inevitable and start getting down to work on their \_\_\_\_\_ essays. (personal/personnel)
19. \_\_\_\_\_ or not the students' essays were neatly written and legible, the teacher planned to read them carefully and comment on them. (Whether/Weather)
20. The \_\_\_\_\_ desks where the students sat suddenly fell silent when the essay writing finally began. (stationary/stationery)

## Answers

1. accept
2. lose
3. they're
4. affect
5. too
6. knew
7. Whose
8. fourth
9. principal
10. advise
11. persecuting
12. bibliography
13. adopt
14. dual
15. effect
16. already
17. breath
18. personal
19. Whether
20. stationary

For additional practice with homonyms, see

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice01.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice02.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice03.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice04.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice09.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice10.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice11.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice11.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice13.htm>

<http://www.chompchomp.com/hotpotatoes/wordchoice14.htm>

# Appendix F: Transitional Devices

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/transitions.htm>

## TRANSITIONS

THE MOST CONVINCING IDEAS IN THE WORLD, expressed in the most beautiful sentences, will move no one unless those ideas are properly connected. Unless readers can move easily from one thought to another, they will surely find something else to read or turn on the television.

Providing transitions between ideas is largely a matter of attitude. You must never assume that your readers know what you know. In fact, it's a good idea to assume not only that your readers need all the information that you have and need to know how you arrived at the point you're at, but also that they are not quite as quick as you are. You might be able to leap from one side of the stream to the other; believe that your readers need some stepping stones and be sure to place them in readily accessible and visible spots.

There are four basic mechanical considerations in providing transitions between ideas: using transitional expressions, repeating key words and phrases, using pronoun reference, and using parallel form.

### Using Transitional Tags

Transitional tags run the gamut from the most simple — the little conjunctions: *and*, *but*, *nor*, *for*, *yet*, *or*, (and sometimes) *so* — to more complex signals that ideas are somehow connected — the conjunctive adverbs and transitional expressions such as *however*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *on the other hand*.

The use of the little conjunctions — especially *and* and *but* — comes naturally for most writers. However, the question whether one can begin a sentence with a small conjunction often arises. Isn't the conjunction at the beginning of the sentence a sign that the sentence should have been connected to the prior sentence? Well, sometimes, yes. But often the initial conjunction calls attention to the sentence in an effective way, and that's just what you want. Over-used, beginning a sentence with a conjunction can be distracting, but the device can add a refreshing dash to a sentence and speed the narrative flow of your text. Restrictions against beginning a sentence with *and* or *but* are based on shaky grammatical foundations; some of the most influential writers in the language have been happily ignoring such restrictions for centuries.

Here is a chart of the transitional devices (also called **conjunctive adverbs** or **adverbial conjunctions**) accompanied with a simplified definition of function (note that some devices appear with more than one definition):

<b>addition</b>	again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too
<b>comparison</b>	also, in the same way, likewise, similarly
<b>concession</b>	granted, naturally, of course
<b>contrast</b>	although, and yet, at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet
<b>emphasis</b>	certainly, indeed, in fact, of course
<b>example or illustration</b>	after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly
<b>summary</b>	all in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize
<b>time sequence</b>	after a while, afterward, again, also, and then, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when

## Repetition Of Key Words And Phrases

The ability to connect ideas by means of repetition of key words and phrases sometimes meets a natural resistance based on the fear of being repetitive. We've been trained to loathe redundancy. Now we must learn that catching a word or phrase that's important to a reader's comprehension of a piece and replaying that word or phrase creates a musical motif in that reader's head. Unless it is overworked and obtrusive, repetition lends itself to a sense of coherence (or at least to the illusion of coherence). Remember Lincoln's advice:

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. In fact, you can't forget Lincoln's advice, because it has become part of the music of our language. Remember to use this device to link paragraphs as well as sentences.

## Pronoun Reference

Pronouns quite naturally connect ideas because pronouns almost always refer the reader to something earlier in the text. I cannot say "This is true because . . ." without causing the reader to consider what "this" could mean. Thus, the pronoun causes the reader to sum up, quickly and subconsciously, what was said before (what *this* is) before going on to the *because* part of my reasoning.

We should hardly need to add, however, that it must always be perfectly clear what a pronoun refers to. If my reader cannot instantly know what *this* is, then my sentence is ambiguous and misleading. Also, do not rely on unclear pronoun references to avoid responsibility: "They say that . . ."

## Parallelism

Music in prose is often the result of parallelism, the deliberate repetition of larger structures of phrases, even clauses and whole sentences.

### Look at the following paragraph:

The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. The skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features of the mummies were evident. It is possible to diagnose the disease they suffered in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies. The process was remarkably effective. Sometimes apparent were the fatal afflictions of the dead people: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, and polio killed a child king. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages.

Though weak, this paragraph is not a total washout. It starts with a topic sentence, and the sentences that follow are clearly related to the topic sentence. In the language of writing, the paragraph is *unified* (i.e., it contains no irrelevant details). However, the paragraph is not *coherent*. The sentences are disconnected from each other, making it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's train of thought.

Below is the same paragraph revised for coherence. *Italics* indicates pronouns and repeated/restated key words, **bold** indicates transitional tag-words, and underlining indicates parallel structures.

The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by *making mummies* of them. **In short**, *mummification* consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages. **And** *the process* was remarkably effective. **Indeed**, *mummies* several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. *Their* skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features are **still** evident. *Their* diseases in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies, are **still** diagnosable. **Even** *their* fatal afflictions are **still** apparent: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head; a child king died from polio.

The paragraph is now much more coherent. The organization of the information and the links between sentences help readers move easily from one sentence to the next. Notice how this writer uses a variety of coherence devices, sometimes in combination, to achieve overall paragraph coherence.

## Exercise 1

The following essay is divided into several parts. Analyze how the language is held together by the four mechanical devices for coherence: **pronoun reference**, **repetition of key terms**, **transitional tag words**, and **parallel form**. Look at the first example.

### ***Accounting for Taste***

By James Gleick

1. Hello, James Gleick," said Amazon.com the other day (*click here* if you're someone else). "Take a peek at your brand new music recommendations."  
I peeked. Amazon's computers predicted that I would like the Beastie Boys, Adiemus, Frank Sinatra, Harvey Danger, and the Dave Matthews Band. What an impressive list! All right, I don't actually care for any of these, but still. It was quite a shot in the dark, considering I'd never been to Amazon's music department before. This is the way it's going on the Internet: if marketers want your money and your time and your "eyeballs," they feel they should figure out who you are and what you like.

Pronoun Reference: these, it, this, they, you

Repetition of Key Terms: peek, I, your...and...,

Transitional Tag Words: but still,

Parallel Form: your money and your time and your eyeballs, who you are and what you like

2. Not only does their software try to calculate your taste in music by keeping track of the music you buy, it even tries to work out your taste in music from your reading habits. This could be a parlor game: If you like Vladimir Nabokov, maybe you'll also like Igor Stravinsky? If you like *War and Peace*, maybe you'll like the *1812 Overture*?

If you like E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, maybe you'll like Scott Joplin's ragtime?

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and 10,000 Maniacs?

*Consumer Reports* and Crash Test Dummies?

Kafka's "Metamorphosis" and the Beatles?

Pronoun Reference:

Repetition of Key Terms:

Transitional Tag Words:

Parallel Form:



3. We like to believe that our souls are our own and there's no accounting for taste. So it's disconcerting to find that, on line, there's suddenly lots of it. Amazon has its BookMatcher, the music store CDnow has its Album Advisor — sooner or later every merchant of just about everything will follow suit, analyzing your private likes and dislikes with "real-time recommendation engines" based on "collaborative filters" and fuzzy logic.

The basic idea is the same everywhere. Say you favor turtlenecks, convertibles, nautical history, bebop, and zinfandel. No doubt you are proud of your rare good taste, but it's a big world, and somewhere in a million-entry electronic-commerce database are a few other people with the same preferences.

If you knew that your doppelgängers were raving about the latest Mike Leigh movie, wouldn't you want to give it a look? In the jargon of the collaborative-filter game, these weird pals are your "community" and your "trusted associates." Their taste might be more in tune with yours than the few people you trust in your own small circle of friends.

Pronoun Reference:

Repetition of Key Terms:

Transitional Tag Words:

Parallel Form:

4. The whole thing is just a mildly clever database look-up, but maybe it works, at least for some people and some kinds of taste. It has no intelligence about the content of the merchandise — Mozart and Madonna might be flavors of ice cream, for all it knows. It only has the beginnings of what could become a formidable electronic dossier: your purchasing history plus your volunteered comments about what you love and what you hate. At CDnow, for example, a customer can choose buttons for "I own this already" or "Not for me"; the computers, of course, watch and learn.

It's scary. "Is one's entire psyche's most secret landscape really a fairly public thing, given just a few pieces of information?" asks Douglas R. Hofstadter, the cognitive theorist and author of *Gödel, Escher, Bach*. "If you know that I love Chopin and Bach and am totally cool to Beethoven, can you predict that I love Cole Porter and Fats Waller but am indifferent to Oscar Peterson and Charlie Parker, and hate Elvis Presley?"

"What is disturbing, to spell it out, is the idea that one's taste, which seems like such a personal thing, connected with and determined by one's inmost being, should have, in a way, a mechanically, nearly deterministically, knowable nature."

Pronoun Reference:

Repetition of Key Terms:

Transitional Tag Words:

Parallel Form:

5. Maybe we're not quite knowable at that. And these are computers, so the mistakes they make can look very, very stupid. When they go off the rails in a sensitive area like taste, some people get angry. "The worst thing of all," says one irate customer, Russ Korins, "if you like Third Eye Blind — who sing 'Semi-Charmed Life,' that song that goes doo doo dooooo, doo doo DOO do, and 'Graduate,' a mainstream version of Avenue A rebel rock, screaming, 'Can I graduate?!' — then what do they also recommend? *The Four Seasons* by A. Vivaldi."

At CD now, they take this sort of thing in stride. "You can't argue with the customer — they know what they like," says Evan Schwartz, director of product management. "People love to click on 'Not for me,' 'Not for me.'"

When customers click, and especially when they buy, they add to the storehouse of information about that mercurial, irrational, chaotic thing we call taste. As knowledge builds up, maybe the computers will stop recommending Vivaldi to Third Eye Blind fans. Or maybe it will turn out that Vivaldi and Third Eye Blind have some kind of century-bridging affinity, even if no musicologist could say exactly what. Or maybe it's a moving target, and last year's Third Eye Blind fans have a different sensibility from this year's.

Pronoun Reference:

Repetition of Key Terms:

Transitional Tag Words:

Parallel Form:

6. You might think of these growing databases as merchandising dossiers. Marketers are keeping a file on you, and if it's not as tangible or incriminating as your F.B.I. file, it's too personal for comfort. "These exhaustive lists become much more than mere lists; they act as electronic psychoanalysts," writes David Shenk in his recent book, *Data Smog*.

Under pressure from privacy advocates, most companies in the collaborative-filtering business pledge not to share information without customers' consent. Even if the trail of your reading history leads your bookseller to conclude that you're on the verge of buying a new red Porsche Boxster or a blue Gap dress, Amazon promises not to tell the car companies or the special prosecutor.

Still, if we have learned anything, we know that information tends to get around. Do I really want the whole Web to know I'm a Beastie Boys, Frank Sinatra, Harvey Danger kind of guy? I didn't even know that myself.

Pronoun Reference:

Repetition of Key Terms:

Transitional Tag Words:

Parallel Form:

## Answers

2. Pronoun Reference: their, your and you, This  
Repetition of Key Terms: taste in music, If you like...maybe you'll like...,  
question structures at end of section  
Transitional Tag Words: Not only,  
Parallel Form:
3. Pronoun Reference: it, you and your, These weird pals  
Repetition of Key Terms: Amazon has its BookMatcher, the music store  
CDnow has its Album Advisor, collaborative filters  
Transitional Tag Words: but  
Parallel Form: your community...your trusted associates
4. Pronoun Reference: "This whole thing" refers to earlier paragraph, it,  
you and your  
Repetition of Key Terms: it, you and your,  
Transitional Tag Words: to spell it out  
Parallel Form: "I love Chopin and Bach and am totally cool ..."  
and "I love Cole Porter and Fats Waller but am  
indifferent..."
5. Pronoun Reference: This sort of thing, It's a moving target  
Repetition of Key Terms: Vivaldi, Third Eye Blind  
Transitional Tag Words: And, or (used twice)  
Parallel Form:
6. Pronoun Reference: It's, you and your, that  
Repetition of Key Terms: Collaborative filtering  
Transitional Tag Words: and, still  
Parallel Form: these grooving databases and these exhaustive  
lists

# Appendix G: Shifts

<http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Shifts.pdf>

Writing should be consistent in tense, voice, mood, person, and number.

## Shifts in Tense

She *makes* a bold proclamation and then *rushed* down the stairs.

The teacher *told* the students they would not pass the course unless they *complete* all of their assignments.

## Shifts in Voice

She wrote the introduction after the first chapter had been finished.

In the morning we painted the bedroom, and in the afternoon the curtains were hung.

After you complete the application, the form should be given to the personnel office.

## Shifts in Mood

*Read* the chapter carefully, and then you *should answer* the questions at the end of the chapter.

It is important that she *read* the information and *writes* notes to review later.

## Shifts in Person

*I* bought my furniture from that store because *you* pay no interest for one year.

When *one* begins college, *you* experience many new situations.

*We* sat through the beginning of the lecture, and *you* could tell the speaker was not prepared.

## Shifts in Number

If a *student* does not have good study habits, *they* will have a difficult time in college.

Each person should be on time, or *they* will miss their appointment.

**Exercise 1** [http://wps.ablongman.com/long\\_anson\\_lhbwc\\_3/6/1715/439074.cw/index.html](http://wps.ablongman.com/long_anson_lhbwc_3/6/1715/439074.cw/index.html)

Read the following questions and check (✓) the correct answer.

1. ( ) In grammatical terms, "person" refers to
  - A. The tone most appropriate for the person (readers) being addressed
  - B. The difference between first, second, and third person
  - C. The person reading the writing
  - D. None
  
2. ( ) Which word below is in the third person?
  - A. Myself
  - B. Engineers
  - C. You
  - D. We
  
3. ( ) Which sentence below do you recognize as a shift in person?
  - A. A student should avoid taking a business writing course until you've taken a first-year composition course.
  - B. I find composition challenging, but I'm looking forward to taking business writing.
  - C. He enjoys business writing, but he doesn't have experience working with memos.
  - D. None
  
4. ( ) Which below do you recognize as an example of a shift in number?
  - A. If a Republican goes to the Democratic National Convention, you might not feel very comfortable.
  - B. Everyone who came to the wedding left their gift at the back of the church.
  - C. Someone left his or her lights on in the parking lot.
  - D. None of these
  
5. ( ) Which pronoun below is plural?
  - A. He
  - B. It
  - C. Everybody
  - D. All of these are singular.
  
6. ( ) Which sentence is correct?
  - A. Everyone needs to listen to his or her mentor.
  - B. All of the players sent their coach a card.
  - C. The leader of a large country like the United States must make sure his or her budget is carefully studied.
  - D. All of these are correct.

7. ( ) Which sentence do you recognize as a shift in verb tense?
- A. Anne learned about the intricacies of her disease and even talked to a specialist who says that nearly all of the side effects can be treated.
  - B. Nearly every day of her life is a struggle, but she finds it easy to stay committed to healing.
  - C. Anne is crying today because she lost her job last week.
  - D. None of these
8. ( ) What kind of shift can you recognize in the following sentence? In Shakespeare's play, Hamlet is very angry with his mother, and plans to speak honestly to her, which he eventually did do.
- A. Shift in person
  - B. Shift in tense
  - C. Shift in mood
  - D. The sentence is correct.
9. ( ) What kind of shift can you recognize in the following sentence? "It was necessary that our team work hard and does well."
- A. Shifts in person
  - B. Shift in indirect quotation
  - C. Shift in mood
  - D. The sentence is correct.
10. ( ) What kind of shift can you recognize in the following sentence? "Our company sells over 20,000 units a year, and half have been sold to schools."
- A. Shift in voice
  - B. Shift in indirect quotation
  - C. Shift in mood
  - D. The sentence is correct.

## Answers

1.B 2.B 3.A 4.B 5.D 6.D 7.A 8.B 9.C 10.A

**Exercise 2** <http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/learningcenter/Shifts.pdf>

Check (✓) the appropriate shift in each group of sentences below.

1. ( ) When one must miss class, you should find out what material was covered.  
( ) When you must miss class, you should find out what material was covered.  
( ) If a student must miss class, they should find out what material was covered.
2. ( ) Since she knew the course would be difficult, she arranged to have a tutor.  
( ) A tutor was arranged by her since she knew the course would be difficult.  
( ) Since she knew the course would be difficult, a tutor was arranged by her.
3. ( ) Everywhere you look, I see preparations for the holiday season.  
( ) Everywhere I have been looking, I see preparations for the holiday season.  
( ) Everywhere I look, I see preparations for the holiday season.
4. ( ) My friend asked me to come for dinner and also wants me to bring my video tape.  
( ) My friend asked me to come for dinner and is wanting me to bring my video tape.  
( ) My friend asked me to come for dinner and to bring my video tape.
5. ( ) Everyone was asked to bring their favorite dish to the pot luck dinner.  
( ) Everyone was asked to bring his or her favorite dish to the pot luck dinner.  
( ) They were asked to bring his or her favorite dish to the pot luck dinner.
6. ( ) When students apply to colleges, it is important that he or she investigate each school thoroughly.  
( ) When students apply to colleges, it is important that they investigate each school thoroughly.  
( ) When a student applies to colleges, it is important that they investigate each school thoroughly.
7. ( ) Go to the store after work, and then you should come straight home.  
( ) Go to the store after work, and then you should be coming straight home.  
( ) Go to the store after work, and then come straight home.
8. ( ) If you arrive late, you will miss the best part of the performance.  
( ) If one arrives late, you will miss the best part of the performance.  
( ) If you arrive late, you will be missing the best part of the performance.
9. ( ) As soon as the meeting began, the manager was paged by the secretary.  
( ) As soon as the meeting began, the secretary paged the manager.  
( ) As soon as the meeting began, the manager was being paged by the secretary.
10. ( ) Most students pass that professor's class, but a few always fail the course.  
( ) Most students pass that professor's class, but a few always failed the course.  
( ) Most students pass that professor's class, but a few are always failing the course.

11. ( ) Begin your assignment well in advance, and always proofread your paper carefully.  
( ) Begin your assignment well in advance, and you should always proofread your paper carefully.  
( ) Begin your assignment well in advance, and your paper should always be proofread carefully.
12. ( ) After we developed the photographs, we post them on the internet.  
( ) After we developed the photographs, they were posted on the internet by us.  
( ) After we developed the photographs, we posted them on the internet.
13. ( ) The skater glided across the ice and was applauded by the crowd.  
( ) The skater glides across the ice, and the audience applauded.  
( ) The skater glided across the ice, and the audience applauded.
14. ( ) The cat devoured the entire can of tuna, and then looks up in triumph.  
( ) The cat devoured the entire can of tuna, and then looked up in triumph.  
( ) The cat has devoured the entire can of tuna, and then looked up in triumph.
15. ( ) After completing the training, the instructor gives us certificates.  
( ) After we completed the training, the instructor gave us certificates.  
( ) After the training is completed by us, the instructor gives us certificates.

### Answers

1.B 2.A 3.C 4.C 5.B 6.B 7.C 8.A 9.B 10.A 11.A 12.C 13.C 14.B 15.B



**Exercise 3** [http://sun.iwu.edu/~writcent/shifts&mixed\\_construction.html](http://sun.iwu.edu/~writcent/shifts&mixed_construction.html)

**Correct shifts in person and number in these sentences:**

1. A typical monastic community would usually confine their dramatic activities to Christmas, Easter, and perhaps one or two saints' days.
2. Although we can locate a number of saints' plays in the early drama of Western Europe, you can't find them all located in one place.
3. Until the nineteenth century, comedy was inappropriate to serious religious dramas; they saw it as almost blasphemous.
4. The villainous characters in medieval drama are usually comic but not lovable; he is insensitive, even cruel.

**Correct the shifts in tense, voice, and mood in these sentences:**

5. Business has always been attracted by the language of football, for example, and it often will have invoked terms such as team player, game plan, and optioned out.
6. The connection is far from accidental in that both areas celebrated aggression.
7. If there were any doubt left about the connection between sports and business, recent surveys show that companies pay extravagant sums in order to rent private viewing suites at sports complexes.
8. Politicians will routinely use sports talk, and they use these figures of speech to curry favor with sports-minded voters.
9. Politicians and businesspeople use sports analogies, and complex ethical issues are often transformed into simple matters of strategy.
10. *Revise this sentence to eliminate sexist language:* Any candidate should file his papers by noon.

## Answers

1. A typical monastic community would usually confine **its** dramatic activities to Christmas, Easter, and perhaps one or two saints' days.
2. Although we can locate a number of saints' plays in the early drama of Western Europe, **we** can't find them all located in one place.
3. Until the nineteenth century, comedy was inappropriate to serious religious dramas; they saw **them** as almost blasphemous.
4. The villainous characters in medieval drama are usually comic but not lovable; **they are** insensitive, even cruel.
5. Business has always been attracted by the language of football, for example, and it often **has invoked** terms such as team player, game plan, and optioned out.
6. The connection is far from accidental in that both areas **celebrate** aggression.
7. If there were any doubt left about the connection between sports and business, recent surveys **would show** that companies pay extravagant sums in order to rent private viewing suites at sports complexes.
8. Politicians will routinely use sports talk, and they **will use** these figures of speech to curry favor with sports-minded voters.
9. Politicians and businesspeople use sports analogies, and **they often transform complex ethical issues** into simple matters of strategy.
10. *Revise this sentence to eliminate sexist language:* Any candidate should file his **or her** papers by noon.

For more practice on shifts, see

[http://www.kwantlen.ca/esl/elst/online\\_lessons/verb\\_tense.htm](http://www.kwantlen.ca/esl/elst/online_lessons/verb_tense.htm)

[http://wps.ablongman.com/long\\_faigley\\_penguinhb\\_1/7/1978/506544.cw/index.html%20parentloc](http://wps.ablongman.com/long_faigley_penguinhb_1/7/1978/506544.cw/index.html%20parentloc)

[http://wps.ablongman.com/long\\_anson\\_lhbwc\\_3/6/1715/439074.cw/index.html](http://wps.ablongman.com/long_anson_lhbwc_3/6/1715/439074.cw/index.html)

[http://www.aliscot.com/bigdog/consist\\_exercise.htm](http://www.aliscot.com/bigdog/consist_exercise.htm)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/22/49>

# Appendix H: Additional Resources for Grammar Practice

**University of Victoria Writer's Guide** <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/MasterToc.html>  
How to plan, organize and write essays. Includes useful tips on exam essay writing..

**Lone Star College-North Harris Grammar Proficiency Exam Study Packet**  
<http://www.lonestar.edu/grammar-proficiency-exam.htm>

**Grammar Bytes** <http://www.chompchomp.com/menu.htm>  
Grammar site where you can find detailed information of common grammar terms, test your grammar knowledge with interactive exercises and keep track of the work you complete with handouts that accompany the interactive exercise. In addition, you can find PowerPoint presentations, videos at YouTube, and tips and rules for fixing grammar errors.

**Essay Punch** <http://www.essaypunch.com/>  
Essaypunch.com takes users through the actual steps of writing a basic essay.

**Guide to Grammar and Style** <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/>  
Put together by Professor Jack Lynch of Rutgers University. Lots of good advice, easy to use (alphabetical listing, hyperlinked), extremely useful.

**Guide to Writing a Basic Essay** <http://members.tripod.com/%7Elivingston/essay/index.html>  
This site takes students through a few simple steps for writing an essay.

**HyperGrammar:** <http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/grammar.html>  
*HyperGrammar* is an electronic grammar course at the University of Ottawa's [Writing Centre](#).

**How the Language Really Works: The Fundamentals of Critical Reading and Effective Writing**  
<http://www.criticalreading.com/>  
*No quizzes here - but the info on how to read critically is good (for advanced learners, since it uses advanced vocabulary).*

**Modern English Grammar** [http://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/engl\\_126/book126.htm](http://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/engl_126/book126.htm)  
Daniel Kies, Department of English, College of DuPage, maintains this complete and easy-to-navigate textbook.

**Paradigm: Online Writing Assistant** <http://www.powa.org/>  
A superb, nicely organized, and extremely helpful guide for Composition. By Chuck Guilford, an English Professor at Boise State University.

**[The] Elements of Style** <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>  
A hyperlinked version of the venerable style guide written by William Strunk (not the E.B. White-edited version). Maintained by the Bartleby Project at Columbia University.

**[The] Purdue University Online Writing Lab [OWL]** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>  
Contains on-line exercises and links to other resources for writing assistance. One of the best academic sites for writing help.

**Spelling** <http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/801.htm>

**Writer's Web** <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb.html> This site is maintained by the Writing Center at the University of Richmond. The material here on getting started with writing projects and on peer editing is especially helpful. Visit, also, the material in "Focusing & Connecting Ideas."

**COMPASS** Writing Practice Tests <https://web.gsc.edu/fs/mhorton/LSenglish/>  
This link will take you to Gainesville State's interactive COMPASS writing practice tests.