



**Basic Grammar Rules**

**Subject-Verb Agreement**

<p>Singular subjects take singular verbs; plural subjects take plural verbs.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect: The dog run.</li> <li>• Correct: The dog runs.</li> <li>• Incorrect: The dogs runs.</li> <li>• Correct: The dogs run.</li> </ul>
<p>When a sentence has a compound subject joined by 'and', use a plural verb unless the subjects together form a single unit.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct: Jack and Jill went up the hill.</li> <li>• Correct: Mac and cheese is my favorite dish.</li> </ul>
<p>If the subject is separated from the verb by words like 'along with', 'as well as', ignore these phrases.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct: The politician, along with his aides, is expected shortly.</li> <li>• Incorrect: The politician, along with his aides, are expected shortly.</li> </ul>

**Pronoun Agreement**

<p>Pronouns must agree in number and gender with their antecedents.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect: Each student should bring their book.</li> <li>• Correct: Each student should bring his or her book.</li> <li>• Correct: All students should bring their books.</li> </ul>
<p>Use singular pronouns with singular indefinite pronouns (e.g., everyone, someone, nobody).</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct: Everyone should do his or her best.</li> <li>• Incorrect: Everyone should do their best.</li> </ul>

**Correct Tense Usage**

<p>Maintain consistent tense throughout a sentence or paragraph unless a shift in time is intended.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect: I went to the store, and I will buy milk.</li> <li>• Correct: I went to the store, and I bought milk.</li> <li>• Correct: I am going to the store, and I will buy milk.</li> </ul>
<p>Use the correct tense for the intended meaning (past, present, future, perfect tenses).</p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct: I had finished my work before he arrived.</li> <li>• Correct: I will have finished my work by tomorrow.</li> </ul>

**Punctuation Essentials**

**Commas**

<p>Use commas to separate items in a list.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need to buy milk, bread, and eggs.</li> </ul>
<p>Use commas to separate independent clauses when they are joined by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet).</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wanted to go to the park, but it started to rain.</li> </ul>
<p>Use commas after introductory phrases or clauses.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the movie, we went for ice cream.</li> </ul>
<p>Use commas to set off nonessential information.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My brother, who is a doctor, lives in New York.</li> </ul>

**Semicolons**

<p>Use semicolons to join two closely related independent clauses.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sky is clear; the stars are twinkling.</li> </ul>
<p>Use semicolons to separate items in a list when the items themselves contain commas.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I visited Paris, France; Rome, Italy; and London, England.</li> </ul>

**Apostrophes**

<p>Use apostrophes to indicate possession.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dog's bone.</li> </ul>
<p>Use apostrophes to indicate contractions.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is = It's</li> <li>• Cannot = Can't</li> </ul>

**Stylistic Considerations**

## Clarity and Conciseness

Avoid unnecessary words and phrases. Be direct and to the point.

### Example:

- Wordy: Due to the fact that it was raining, the game was canceled.
- Concise: Because it was raining, the game was canceled.

Use active voice whenever possible. It makes your writing more direct and engaging.

### Example:

- Passive: The ball was caught by the player.
- Active: The player caught the ball.

## Common Grammatical Errors

### Misplaced Modifiers

Modifiers should be placed as close as possible to the words they modify.

**Incorrect:** I saw a dog running down the street with a limp.

**Correct:** Running down the street, I saw a dog with a limp.

## Word Choice

Choose words that are precise and appropriate for your audience.

### Example:

- Instead of 'big', use 'enormous', 'large', or 'substantial', depending on the context.

Avoid jargon and overly technical terms unless your audience is familiar with them.

### Example:

- Instead of 'utilize', use 'use'.

## Sentence Variety

Vary the length and structure of your sentences to keep your writing interesting.

### Example:

- Mix short, punchy sentences with longer, more complex ones.

Use different sentence beginnings to avoid monotony.

### Example:

- Instead of always starting with the subject, try starting with an adverb or prepositional phrase.

### Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier does not have a clear word to modify in the sentence.

**Incorrect:** Having finished the game, the dinner was delicious.

**Correct:** Having finished the game, we enjoyed a delicious dinner.

### Faulty Parallelism

Items in a list or series should have the same grammatical structure.

**Incorrect:** I like to swim, hiking, and to bike.

**Correct:** I like to swim, hike, and bike. (or) I like swimming, hiking, and biking.