

PSSA 5TH GRADE WRITING ELIGIBLE CONTENT

These are the grammar and style rules that 5th grade students are expected
to know

CC.1.4.5

*Conventions of
Language
(Grammar)*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

D.1.1.1	Conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections	2
D.1.1.2	The perfect verb tense	10
D.1.1.3	Verb tenses to convey time, sequences, states, conditions	12
D.1.1.4	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense	14
D.1.1.5	Use correlative conjunctions	15
D.1.1.6	Produce complete sentences; avoid fragments and run-ons	16
D.1.1.7	Correctly use frequently confused words	18
D.1.1.8	Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement	23
D.1.2.1	Use punctuation to separate items in a series	27
D.1.2.2	Use a comma to separate introductory elements	30
D.1.2.3	Use a comma to set off yes and no, a tag question, and direct address	32
D.1.2.4	Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works	33
D.1.2.5	Spell grade-appropriate words correctly	35
D.2.1.1	Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, interest, and style	36
D.2.1.2	Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely	41
D.2.1.3	Choose punctuation for effect	43
D.2.1.4	Choose words and phrases for effect	45

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D.1.1.1 Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences.

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are words used as joiners.

Different kinds of conjunctions join different kinds of grammatical structures.

The following are the kinds of conjunctions:

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS (FANBOYS)

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

Coordinating conjunctions join equals to one another:

words to words, phrases to phrases, clauses to clauses.

Examples:

word to word Most children like *cookies* **and** *milk*.

phrase to phrase The gold is hidden *at the beach* **or** *by the lakeside*.

clause to clause *What you say* **and** *what you do* are two different things.

Coordinating conjunctions usually form looser connections than other conjunctions do.

Examples:

Marge was late for work, **and** she received a cut in pay. (very loose)

Marge was late for work, **so** she received a cut in pay. (loose)

Because Marge was late for work, she received a cut in pay.
(The subordinate conjunction **because** creates a tighter link between the two ideas.)

Coordinating conjunctions go in between items joined, not at the beginning or end.

Examples:

Correct: I like coffee, **but** I don't like tea.

Incorrect: **But** I don't like tea, I like coffee.

Punctuation with coordinating conjunctions:

When a coordinating conjunction joins **two** words, phrases, or subordinate clauses, no comma should be placed before the conjunction.

Examples:

words: *cookies* **and** *milk*.

phrases: *at the beach* **or** *by the lakeside*.

subordinate clauses: *what you say* **and** *what you do*

A coordinating conjunction joining **three or more** words, phrases, or subordinate clauses creates a series and requires commas between the elements.

Examples:

words: *peanuts, cookies, and milk*.

phrases: *in the mountains, at the beach, or by the lakeside*.

subordinate clauses: *what you think, what you say, and what you do*

A coordinating conjunction joining **two independent clauses** creates a compound sentence and requires a comma before the coordinating conjunction

Examples:

Tom ate all the peanuts, **so** Phil ate the cookies.

I don't care for the beach, **but** I enjoy a good vacation in the mountains.

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

These conjunctions join independent clauses together.

The following are frequently used conjunctive adverbs:

<i>after all</i>	<i>in addition</i>	<i>next</i>
<i>also</i>	<i>incidentally</i>	<i>nonetheless</i>
<i>as a result</i>	<i>indeed</i>	<i>on the contrary</i>
<i>besides</i>	<i>in fact</i>	<i>on the other hand</i>
<i>consequently</i>	<i>in other words</i>	<i>otherwise</i>
<i>finally</i>	<i>instead</i>	<i>still</i>
<i>for example</i>	<i>likewise</i>	<i>then</i>
<i>furthermore</i>	<i>meanwhile</i>	<i>therefore</i>
<i>hence</i>	<i>moreover</i>	<i>thus</i>
<i>however</i>	<i>nevertheless</i>	

Examples:

The tire was flat; **therefore**, we called a service station.

It was a hot day; **nevertheless**, the roofers worked on the project all day.

Punctuation: Place a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb and a comma after the conjunctive adverb.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

These words are commonly used as subordinating conjunctions

<i>after</i>	<i>in order (that)</i>	<i>unless</i>
<i>although</i>	<i>insofar as</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>as</i>	<i>in that</i>	<i>when</i>
<i>as far as</i>	<i>lest</i>	<i>whenever</i>
<i>as soon as</i>	<i>no matter how</i>	<i>where</i>
<i>as if</i>	<i>now that</i>	<i>wherever</i>
<i>as though</i>	<i>once</i>	<i>whether</i>
<i>because</i>	<i>provided (that)</i>	<i>while</i>
<i>before</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>why</i>
<i>even if</i>	<i>so that</i>	
<i>even though</i>	<i>supposing (that)</i>	
<i>how</i>	<i>than</i>	
<i>if</i>	<i>that</i>	
<i>inasmuch as</i>	<i>though</i>	
<i>in case (that)</i>	<i>till</i>	

Subordinating conjunctions also join two clauses together, but in doing so, they make one clause dependent (or "subordinate") upon the other.

Examples:

It is raining. }
 We have an umbrella. } Both are independent clauses, simple sentences.

Add **because** to **It is raining**.

because it is raining } This is no longer an independent clause or sentence.

Put the two clauses together.

Because it is raining, we have an umbrella.

OR

We have an umbrella because it is raining.

A subordinating conjunction may appear at a sentence beginning or between two clauses in a sentence.

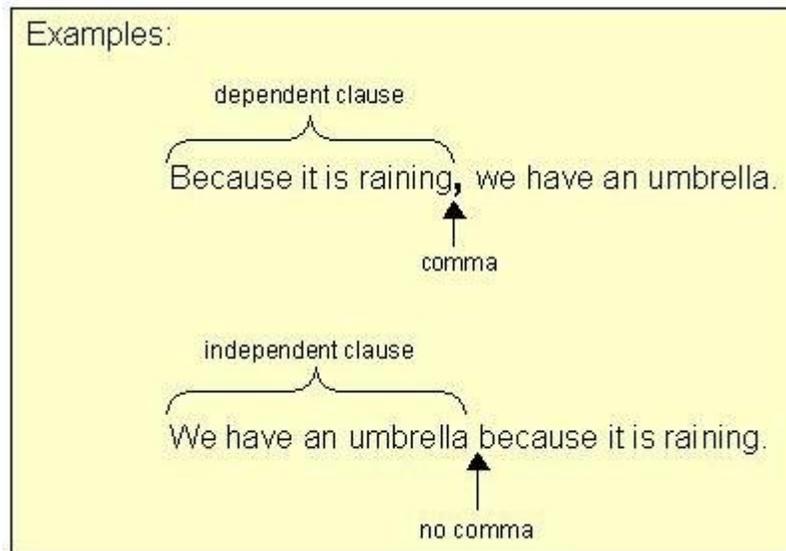
A subordinate conjunction usually provides a tighter connection between clauses than a coordinating conjunctions does.

Loose: It is raining, *so* we have an umbrella.

Tight: *Because it is raining*, we have an umbrella.

Punctuation Note:

When the dependent clause is placed first in a sentence, use a comma between the two clauses. When the independent clause is placed first and the dependent clause second, do not separate the two clauses with a comma.



PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words which begin prepositional phrases.

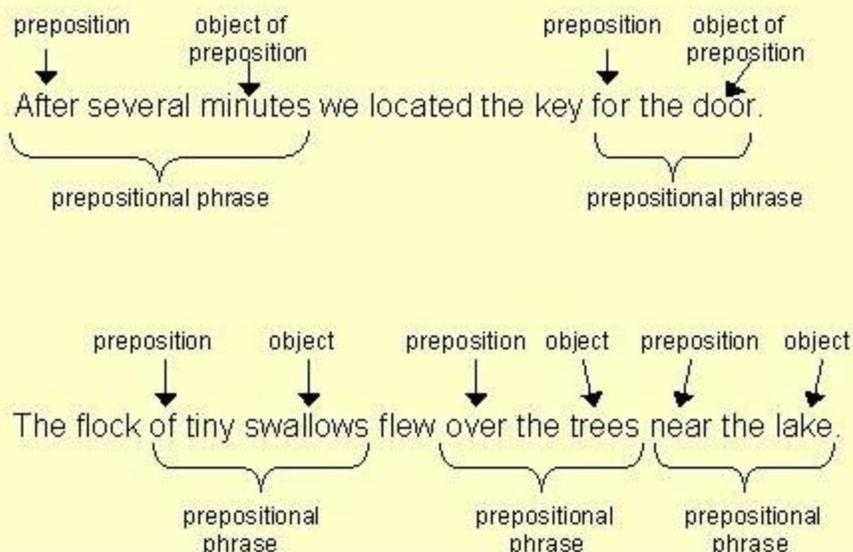
A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words containing a *preposition*, a noun or pronoun *object of the preposition*, and any *modifiers of the object*.

A preposition sits in front of (is “pre-positioned” before) its object.

The following words are the most commonly used prepositions:

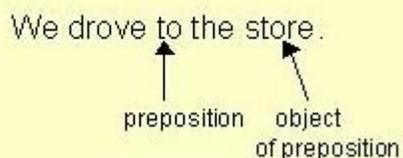
<i>about</i>	<i>below</i>	<i>excepting</i>	<i>off</i>	<i>toward</i>
<i>above</i>	<i>beneath</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>under</i>
<i>across</i>	<i>beside(s)</i>	<i>from</i>	<i>onto</i>	<i>underneath</i>
<i>after</i>	<i>between</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>out</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>against</i>	<i>beyond</i>	<i>in front of</i>	<i>outside</i>	<i>up</i>
<i>along</i>	<i>but</i>	<i>inside</i>	<i>over</i>	<i>upon</i>
<i>among</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>in spite of</i>	<i>past</i>	<i>up to</i>
<i>around</i>	<i>concerning</i>	<i>instead of</i>	<i>regarding</i>	<i>with</i>
<i>at</i>	<i>despite</i>	<i>into</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>within</i>
<i>because of</i>	<i>down</i>	<i>like</i>	<i>through</i>	<i>without</i>
<i>before</i>	<i>during</i>	<i>near</i>	<i>throughout</i>	<i>with regard to</i>
<i>behind</i>	<i>except</i>	<i>of</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>with respect to</i>

Examples of prepositional phrases:



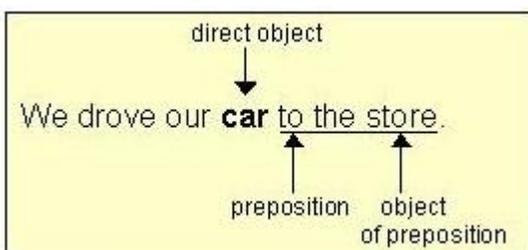
It is useful to locate prepositional phrases in sentences since any noun or pronoun within the prepositional phrase must be the preposition's object and, therefore, cannot be misidentified as a verb's direct object.

Example:



To the store is a prepositional phrase.

Store is the object of the preposition to, not the direct object of the verb *drove*.



Car is the direct object of the verb *drove*.

To the grocery store is a prepositional phrase.

NOTE:

A word that looks like a preposition but is actually part of a verb is called a particle.

Example:

Four armed men **held up** the bank.

↑
particle

Held up is a verb meaning “to rob.”

Therefore, **up** is not a preposition, and **bank** is not the object of a preposition.

Instead, **bank** is the direct object of the verb **held up**.

To avoid confusing **prepositions** with **particles**, test by moving the word (*up*) and words following it to the front of the sentence:

Up the bank four armed men held.

If the resulting sentence does not make sense, then the word belongs with the verb and is a particle, not a preposition.

Note the difference:

Example A:

We ran **up the hill**.

Test: **Up the hill** we ran.

The resulting sentence makes sense. Therefore, **up** is a preposition.

Example A:

We ran **up the bill**.

Test: **Up the bill** we ran. **XXX**

The resulting sentence does not make sense. Therefore, **up** is a particle in this sentence.

The following examples illustrate the difference between prepositions and particles:

He came **by the office** in a big hurry. (*by* = preposition)

He **came by** his fortune honestly. (*by* = particle)

She turned **up that street**. (*up* = preposition)

She **turned up** her nose. (*up* = particle)

Tom lived **down the street**. (*down* = preposition)

We finally **lived down** that incident. (*down* = particle)

Some other examples of particles:

give in

turn in

pull through

wore out

broke up

go in for

put in for

bring up

found out

blow up

look up

make up

look over

Interjections are words or phrases used to exclaim or protest or command. They sometimes stand by themselves, but they are often contained within larger structures.

- Hey! Get off that floor!
- Oh, that is a surprise.
- Good! Now we can move on.
- Wow! I won the lottery!

Most mild interjections are treated as parenthetical elements and set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or set of commas. If the interjection is more forceful, however, it is followed with an exclamation mark. Interjections are rarely used in formal or academic writing.

D.1.1.2 Form and use the perfect verb tenses (e.g., *I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked*).

Present Perfect

The present perfect consists of a past participle (the third principal part) with "has" or "have." It designates action which began in the past but which continues into the present or the effect of which still continues.

1. Betty **taught** for ten years. (simple past)
2. Betty **has taught** for ten years. (present perfect)

The implication in (1) is that Betty has retired; in (2), that she is still teaching.

1. John did his homework. He can go to the movies.
2. If John has done his homework, he can go to the movies.

Infinitives, too, have perfect tense forms when combined with "have," and sometimes problems arise when infinitives are used with verbs such as "hope," "plan," "expect," and "intend," all of which usually point to the future (I wanted to go to the movie. Janet meant to see the doctor.) The perfect tense sets up a sequence by marking the action which began and usually was completed before the action in the main verb.

1. I am happy to have participated in this campaign!
2. John had hoped to have won the trophy.

Thus the action of the main verb points back in time; the action of the perfect infinitive has been completed.

Past Perfect

The past perfect tense designates action in the past just as simple past does, but the action of the past perfect is action completed in the past before another action.

1. John **raised** vegetables and later sold them. (past)
2. John sold vegetables that he **had raised**. (past perfect)

The vegetables were raised before they were sold.

1. Renee **washed** the car when George arrived (simple past)

2. Renee **had washed** the car when George arrived. (past perfect)

In (1), she waited until George arrived and then washed the car. In (2), she had already finished washing the car by the time he arrived.

In sentences expressing condition and result, the past perfect tense is used in the part that states the condition.

1. If I **had done** my exercises, I would have passed the test.

2. I think George would have been elected if **he hadn't sounded** so pompous.

Future Perfect

The future perfect tense designates action that will have been completed at a specified time in the future.

1. Saturday I **will finish** my housework. (simple future)

2. By Saturday noon, I **will have finished** my housework. (future perfect)

D.1.1.3 Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions.

Tense in Independent Clause	Purpose of Dependent Clause/ Tense in Dependent Clause	Example(s)
Simple Present	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 <i>says</i> that he <i>will veto</i> the bill.
Simple Past	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.
Present Perfect or Past Perfect	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> .

Future	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> .
Future Perfect	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> .

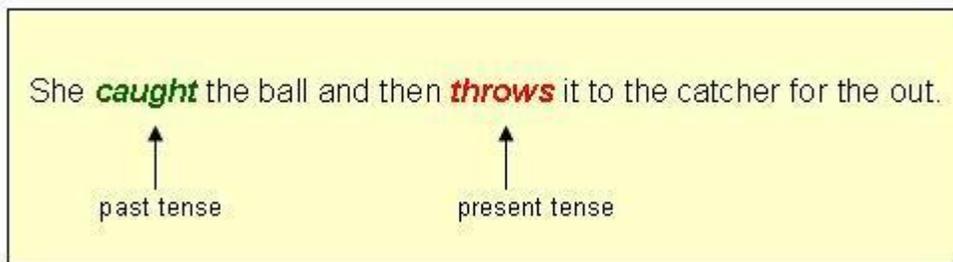
D.1.1.4 Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.

Avoid shifts in

1. verb tense

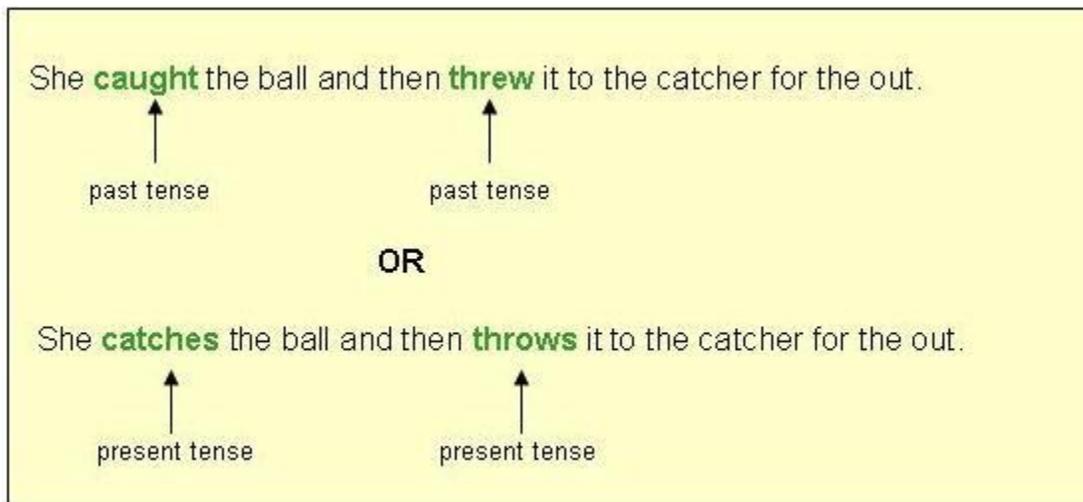
Except for special cases where the intended meaning requires a change in tense, maintain the same tense within a sentence.

Error:- shift in verb tense



The sentence above begins in the past tense but shifts, without reason, to the present tense.

Error repaired



D.1.1.5 Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., *either/or*, *neither/nor*).

B. CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

either. . .or

neither. . . nor

both. . . and

not only. . . but also

These pairs of conjunctions require equal (parallel) structures after each one.

Faulty: Clara *not only* wants money *but also* fame.

Correct: Clara wants *not only* money *but also* fame.

Correct: Clara *not only* wants money *but also* wants fame.

D.1.1.6 Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-on sentences.

Sentence Structure

This lesson addresses sentence structure. Questions about sentence structure make up 30 percent of the questions in Part I of the GED Language Arts, Writing test. Reviewing these skills will also help you prepare for the GED Essay, and it will improve your language skills in general. Topics included in this resource are the following: fragment sentences, run-on sentences, comma splices, parallel structure, modifiers, and coordination and subordination.

Fragment sentences

A complete sentence will have at least one subject and one verb. Sentences are considered **fragments** when they are missing either a subject or a verb. Consider the following two fragment sentences and their corrected versions:

- No Subject: Went to the store to buy brownie mix.
Added Subject: My dad went to the store to buy brownie mix.
- No Verb: Brownie mix at the store expensive.
Added Verb: Brownie mix at the store was expensive.

In addition to containing a subject and verb, a complete sentence will express a complete thought. Consider the following two sentences and their revised versions.

- Incomplete: When he went to the checkout counter to pay for the brownie mix.
Complete: When he went to the checkout counter to pay for the brownie mix, he got distracted by a display of cake mixes.
- Incomplete: The variety of yummy cake mixes.
Complete: The variety of yummy cake mixes convinced him that he'd rather bake a cake than brownies tonight.

Run-on sentences (Run-ons)

A **run-on sentence** occurs when two or more independent clauses are combined without correct punctuation. An **independent clause** is a complete, simple sentence, meaning that it contains a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. There are a few ways to correct run-on sentences. Consider the following run-on sentence and the following options for revising it.

Run-On: The grocery store was really packed with people there must have been a big sale today.

- Correction 1: The grocery store was really packed with people. There must have been a big sale today.

Here, the error has been corrected by simply breaking the run-on sentence into two sentences.

- Correction 2: The grocery store was really packed with people, so there must have been a big sale today.

In this case, the sentence has been corrected by adding a coordinating conjunction and a comma. This is a compound sentence.

- Correction 3: Because the grocery store was really packed with people, there must have been a big sale.

In this example, the sentence has been corrected by adding a subordinating conjunction and a comma. This is a complex sentence

D.1.1.7 Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., *to, too, two; there, their, they're*).

- **ACCEPT**-to receive
ex: He accepts defeat well.
- **EXCEPT**-to take or leave out
ex: Please take all the books off the shelf except for the red one.
- **AFFECT**-to influence
ex: Lack of sleep affects the quality of your work.
- **EFFECT**-n., result, v., to accomplish
ex: The subtle effect of the lighting made the room look ominous.
ex: Can the university effect such a change without disrupting classes?
- **A LOT** (two words)-many.
- **ALOT** (one word)-Not the correct form.
- **ALLUSION**-an indirect reference
ex: The professor made an allusion to Virginia Woolf's work.
- **ILLUSION**-a false perception of reality
ex: They saw a mirage: that is a type of illusion one sees in the desert.
- **ALL READY**-prepared
ex: Dinner was all ready when the guests arrived.
- **ALREADY**-by this time
ex: The turkey was already burned when the guests arrived.
- **ALTOGETHER**-entirely
ex: Altogether, I thought that the student's presentation was well planned.
- **ALL TOGETHER**-gathered, with everything in one place
ex: We were all together at the family reunion last spring.
- **APART**-to be separated
ex: The chain-link fence kept the angry dogs apart. OR My old car fell apart before we reached California.
- **A PART**-to be joined with
ex: The new course was a part of the new field of study at the university. OR A part of this plan involves getting started at dawn.
- **ASCENT**- climb
ex: The plane's ascent made my ears pop.
- **ASSENT**-agreement
ex: The martian assented to undergo experiments.

- **BREATH**-noun, air inhaled or exhaled
ex: You could see his breath in the cold air.
- **BREATHE**-verb, to inhale or exhale
ex: If you don't breathe, then you are dead.

- **CAPITAL**-seat of government. Also financial resources.
ex: The capital of Virginia is Richmond.
ex: The firm had enough capital to build the new plant.
- **CAPITOL**-the actual building in which the legislative body meets
ex: The governor announced his resignation in a speech given at the capitol today.

- **CITE**-to quote or document
ex: I cited ten quotes from the same author in my paper.
- **SIGHT**-vision
ex: The sight of the American flag arouses different emotions in different parts of the world.
- **SITE**-position or place
ex: The new office building was built on the site of a cemetery.

- **COMPLEMENT**-noun, something that completes; verb, to complete
ex: A nice dry white wine complements a seafood entree.
- **COMPLIMENT**-noun, praise; verb, to praise
ex: The professor complimented Betty on her proper use of a comma.

- **CONSCIENCE**-sense of right and wrong
ex: The student's conscience kept him from cheating on the exam.
- **CONSCIOUS**-awake
ex: I was conscious when the burglar entered the house.

- **COUNCIL**-a group that consults or advises
ex: The men and women on the council voted in favor of an outdoor concert in their town.
- **COUNSEL**-to advise
ex: The parole officer counseled the convict before he was released.

- **ELICIT**-to draw or bring out
ex: The teacher elicited the correct response from the student.
- **ILLICIT**-illegal
ex: The Columbian drug lord was arrested for his illicit activities.

- **EMINENT**-famous, respected
ex: The eminent podiatrist won the Physician of the Year award.
- **IMMANENT**-inherent or intrinsic
ex: The meaning of the poem was immanent, and not easily recognized.
- **IMMINENT**-ready to take place
ex: A fight between my sister and me is imminent from the moment I enter my house.

- **ITS**-of or belonging to it
ex: The baby will scream as soon as its mother walks out of the room.
- **IT'S**-contraction for it is
ex: It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood.

- **LEAD**-noun, a type of metal
ex: Is that pipe made of lead?
- **LED**-verb, past tense of the verb "to lead"
ex: She led the campers on an over-night hike.

- **LIE**-to lie down (a person or animal. hint: people can tell lies)
ex: I have a headache, so I'm going to lie down for a while.
(also lying, lay, has/have lain--The dog has lain in the shade all day; yesterday, the dog lay there for twelve hours).
- **LAY**-to lay an object down.
ex: "Lay down that shotgun, Pappy!" The sheriff demanded of the crazed moonshiner.
ex: The town lay at the foot of the mountain.
(also laying, laid, has/have laid--At that point, Pappy laid the shotgun on the ground).

- **LOSE**--verb, to misplace or not win
ex: Mom glared at Mikey. "If you lose that new lunchbox, don't even think of coming home!"
- **LOOSE**--adjective, to not be tight; verb (rarely used)--to release
ex: The burglar's pants were so loose that he was sure to lose the race with the cop chasing him.
ex: While awaiting trial, he was never set loose from jail because no one would post his bail.

- **NOVEL**-noun, a book that is a work of fiction. Do not use "novel" for nonfiction; use "book" or "work."
ex: Mark Twain wrote his novel Adventures of Huckleberry Finn when he was already well known, but before he published many other works of fiction and nonfiction.

- **PASSED**-verb, past tense of "to pass," to have moved
ex: The tornado passed through the city quickly, but it caused great damage.
- **PAST**-belonging to a former time or place
ex: Who was the past president of Microsquish Computers?
ex: Go past the fire station and turn right.
- **PRECEDE**-to come before
ex: Pre-writing precedes the rough draft of good papers.
- **PROCEED**-to go forward
ex: He proceeded to pass back the failing grades on the exam.
- **PRINCIPAL**-adjective, most important; noun, a person who has authority
ex: The principal ingredient in chocolate chip cookies is chocolate chips.
ex: The principal of the school does the announcements each morning.
- **PRINCIPLE**-a general or fundamental truth
ex: The study was based on the principle of gravity.
- **QUOTE**-verb, to cite
ex: I would like to quote Dickens in my next paper.
- **QUOTATION**-noun, the act of citing
ex: The book of famous quotations inspired us all.
- **RELUCTANT**-to hesitate or feel unwilling
ex: We became reluctant to drive further and eventually turned back when the road became icy.
- **RETICENT**-to be reluctant to speak; to be reserved in manner. Note that *The American Heritage Dictionary* lists "reluctant" as a synonym for "reticent," as the third definition. For nuance and variety, we recommend "reticent" for reluctance when speaking or showing emotion (after all, even extroverts can become reluctant).
ex: They called him reticent, because he rarely spoke. But he listened carefully and only spoke when he had something important to say.
- **STATIONARY**-standing still
ex: The accident was my fault because I ran into a stationary object.
- **STATIONERY**-writing paper
ex: My mother bought me stationery that was on recycled paper.
- **SUPPOSED TO**-correct form for "to be obligated to" or "presumed to" NOT "suppose to"
- **SUPPOSE**-to guess or make a conjecture
ex: Do you suppose we will get to the airport on time? When is our plane supposed to arrive? We are supposed to check our bags before we board, but I suppose we could do that at the curb and save time.

- **THAN**-use with comparisons
ex: I would rather go out to eat than eat at the dining hall.
- **THEN**-at that time, or next
ex: I studied for my exam for seven hours, and then I went to bed.
- **THEIR**-possessive form of they
ex: Their house is at the end of the block.
- **THERE**-indicates location (hint: think of "here and there")
ex: There goes my chance of winning the lottery!
- **THEY'RE**-contraction for "they are"
ex: They're in Europe for the summer--again!
- **THROUGH**-by means of; finished; into or out of
ex: He plowed right through the other team's defensive line.
- **THREW**-past tense of throw
ex: She threw away his love letters.
- **THOROUGH**-careful or complete
ex: John thoroughly cleaned his room; there was not even a speck of dust when he finished.
- **THOUGH**-however; nevertheless
ex: He's really a sweetheart though he looks tough on the outside.
- **THRU**-abbreviated slang for through; not appropriate in standard writing
ex: We're thru for the day!
- **TO**-toward
ex: I went to the University of Richmond.
- **TOO**-also, or excessively
ex: He drank too many screwdrivers and was unable to drive home.
- **TWO**-a number
ex: Only two students did not turn in the assignment.
- **WHO**-pronoun, referring to a person or persons
ex: Jane wondered how Jack, who is so smart, could be having difficulties in Calculus.
- **WHICH**-pronoun, replacing a singular or plural thing(s);not used to refer to persons
ex: Which section of history did you get into?
- **THAT**-used to refer to things or a group or class of people
ex: I lost the book that I bought last week.
- **WHO**-used as a subject or as a subject complement (see above)
ex: John is the man who can get the job done.
- **WHOM**-used as an object
ex: Whom did Sarah choose as her replacement?

D.1.1.8 Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

Subject-verb agreement

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

She and **her friends** *are* at the fair.

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

The book or **the pen** *is* in the drawer.

3. When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by or or nor, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is nearer the verb.

The boy or **his friends** *run* every day.
His friends or **the boy** *runs* every day.

4. Doesn't is a contraction of does not and should be used only with a singular subject. Don't is a contraction of do not and should be used only with a plural subject. The exception to this rule appears in the case of the first person and second person pronouns I and you. With these pronouns, the contraction don't should be used.

He doesn't *like* it.
They don't *like* it.

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

One of the boxes *is* open
The people who listen to that music *are* few.
The team captain, as well as his players, *is* anxious.
The book, including all the chapters in the first section, *is* boring.
The woman with all the dogs *walks* down my street.

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

Each of these hot dogs *is* juicy.
Everybody *knows* Mr. Jones.
Either *is* correct.

7. Nouns such as civics, mathematics, dollars, measles, and news require singular verbs.

The news is on at six.

Note: the word **dollars** is a special case. When talking about an amount of money, it requires a singular verb, but when referring to the dollars themselves, a plural verb is required.

Five dollars is a lot of money.

Dollars are often used instead of rubles in Russia.

8. Nouns such as scissors, tweezers, trousers, and shears require plural verbs. (There are two parts to these things.)

These scissors are dull.

Those trousers are made of wool.

9. In sentences beginning with there is or there are, the subject follows the verb. Since there is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows.

There **are** **many questions**.

There **is** **a question**.

10. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person but that are considered singular and take a singular verb, such as group, team, committee, class, and family.

The team runs during practice.

The committee decides how to proceed.

The family has a long history.

My family has never been able to agree.

The crew is preparing to dock the ship.

This sentence is referring to the individual efforts of each crew member. *The Gregg Reference Manual* provides excellent explanations of subject-verb agreement (section 10: 1001).

11. Expressions such as with, together with, including, accompanied by, in addition to, or as well do not change the number of the subject. If the subject is singular, the verb is too.

The President, accompanied by his wife, **is** traveling to India.

All of the books, including yours, **are** in that box.

Pronoun-antecedent agreement

1. Agree in number

If the pronoun takes the place of a singular noun, you have to use a singular pronoun.

If a student parks a car on campus, he or she has to buy a parking sticker.

(INCORRECT: If a student parks a car on campus, they have to buy a parking sticker.)

Remember: the words *everybody*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *each*, *neither*, *nobody*, *someone*, *a person*, etc. are singular and take singular pronouns.

Everybody ought to do his or her best.

(INCORRECT: their best)

Neither of the girls brought her umbrella.

(INCORRECT: their umbrellas)

NOTE: Many people find the construction "his or her" wordy, so if it is possible to use a plural noun as your antecedent and thus you can use "they" as your pronoun, it may be wise to do so. If you do use a singular noun and the context makes the gender clear, then it is permissible to use just "his" or "her" rather than "his or her."

2. Agree in person

If you are writing in the **first person** (I), don't confuse your reader by switching to the **second person** (you) or **third person** (he, she, they, it, etc.). Similarly, if you are using the second person, don't switch to first or third.

When a person comes to class, he or she should have his or her homework ready.

(INCORRECT: When a person comes to class, you should have your homework ready.)

3. Refer clearly to a specific noun.

Don't be vague or ambiguous.

INCORRECT: Although the motorcycle hit the tree, it was not damaged. (Is "it" the motorcycle or the tree?)

INCORRECT: I don't think they should show violence on TV. (Who are "they"?)

INCORRECT: Vacation is coming soon, which is nice. (What is nice, the vacation or the fact that it is coming soon?)

INCORRECT: George worked in a national forest last summer. This may be his life's work. (What word does "this" refer to?)

INCORRECT: If you put this sheet in your notebook, you can refer to it.

D.1.2.1 Use punctuation to separate items in a series.

Punctuating a Series

In order to avoid confusion, it is necessary to separate items in a series with punctuation.

Read the following:

At the store, I bought red pepper salsa wheat tortillas and cheese.

What was bought? Red pepper and salsa, or red pepper salsa? Wheat and tortillas or wheat tortillas? Punctuation marks could eliminate confusion.

Simple Series

When writing a series of three or more items, separate each item with punctuation—usually commas. Generally, a conjunction (and, or) will follow the last comma in the list.

Example: At the store I bought red pepper, salsa, wheat tortillas, and cheese.

Note: Although the serial or Oxford comma (the comma preceding *and* in a series) is not used in journalistic and informal writing, **it is still required** in formal and academic writing.

Interestingly, the use of an ampersand (&) instead of *and* in a series requires no serial comma.

Example: I received counsel from Brooks, McCarthy, Dunn & Derringer, attorneys at law.

Commas are not needed in a series whose elements are all joined by conjunctions.

Examples: I bought salsa and tortillas.

Was it wheat tortillas or flour tortillas or corn tortillas?

Etc. and **so forth** are both preceded and followed by a comma.

Examples: I bought salsa, tortillas, cheese, etc., at the store.

The cashier asked me if I wanted to pay by check, cash, and so forth, when I reached the register.

Note: For more information on comma usage see the handout [Commas](#).

Complex Series

When a sentence contains a series of items that have internal punctuation or that are very long and complex, separate the items in the series with semicolons.

Example: The authors of the textbook include Dr. Susan Lyons, Ph.D; Marcia Shelagan, a noted computer theorist; and Richard Everly, a systems specialist at IBM.

Example: Ajax Meats has three major divisions: the East, which specializes in quality control; the West, which specializes in research and development; and the North, which specializes in keeping dead rats out of the meat.

Note: For more information on semicolons see the handout The Colon, Hyphen, Dash & Semicolon.

Introducing a Series

Colons

When using a colon to introduce a series, the colon must follow a complete sentence and cannot immediately follow the main verb of the clause.

Incorrect: His list of office supplies contains: ceramic pots, a pair of white gloves, a wooden stool, and twenty-five boxes of paper clips.

Correct: His list of office supplies contained unusual items: ceramic pots, a pair of white gloves, a wooden stool, and twenty-five boxes of paper clips.

Note: For more information on colons see the handouts The Colon, Hyphen, Dash & Semicolon and Comma Splices and Fused Sentences.

Serial Phrases

Serial phrases (**the following**, **as follows**) can introduce a series with a colon as long as they are part of a complete sentence.

Example: Weight reduction includes the following: proper diet, aerobic exercise, and flexibility exercises.

Some serial phrases like **such as** and **includes** are not followed by a colon when they are not part of a complete sentence.

Incorrect: The old pool was filled with junk, such as: tires, leaves, and broken pieces of wood.

Correct: The old pool was filled with junk, such as tires, leaves, and broken pieces of wood.

Or: The pool was filled with junk, including tires, leaves, and broken pieces of wood.

Or even: The old pool was filled with junk: tires, leaves, and broken pieces of wood.

i.e., e.g., and Namely

Introducing a series with **i.e.** (*id est*—that is), **e.g.** (*exempli gratia*—for example), or **namely** requires the use of a comma immediately following the phrase.

Examples: He had many luxuries (e.g., a Ferrari, a pet monkey, a ten-foot-deep bathtub, and seven swans a-swimming).

Only the most qualified employees worked on the project, namely, Burnett, Johnson, Reeves, and Nowacki.

D.1.2.2 Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence.

When a sentence begins with an adverbial clause, put a comma after it.

- Although we had reviewed the film twice before, we never noticed these details about the shooting.
- As the day drew to a smoky end, the firefighters put out the last of the embers.

It is permissible, even commonplace, to omit a comma after most brief introductory elements — a prepositional phrase, an adverb, or a noun phrase:

- Yesterday afternoon we sat around waiting for Bill to arrive.
- By evening we had become impatient.
- Jauntily he walked into the hall.

When a prepositional phrase expands to more than three words, say, or becomes connected to yet another prepositional phrase, the use of a comma will depend on the writer's sense of the rhythm and flow of the sentence.

- After his nap Figueroa felt better.
- After his long nap in the backyard hammock, Figueroa felt better.

When an introductory adverbial element seems to modify the entire sentence and not just the verb or some single element in the rest of the sentence, put a comma after it.

- Fortunately, no one in the bridal party was in that car.
- Sadly, the old church was completely destroyed.
- On the other hand, someone obviously was badly injured.

Don't allow a brief introductory element to merge with something following it in a way that can confuse your reader. Try reading the following sentences without their commas:

- Until the spring course lists will not be published.
Until the spring, course lists will not be published.
- Inside the gym was brightly lighted and clean.
Inside, the gym was brightly lighted and clean.

When a sentence begins with an **Absolute Phrase** or an adverbial **Infinitive Phrase**, put a comma after it. (If the infinitive phrase is acting as a noun and is the *subject* of the sentence, be careful *not* to put a comma between the subject and its verb: "To believe in one's self is a good thing.")

- Their headpieces flapping wildly about their ears, the priestesses began their eerie chant.
- To escape with our lives, we would have to run for the exits.

D.1.2.3 Use a comma to set off the words *yes* and *no* (e.g., *Yes, thank you*), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., *It's true, isn't it?*), and to indicate direct address (e.g., *Is that you, Steve?*).

When a sentence begins with the words *yes*, *no*, or *sure* begin a sentence, use a comma.

Examples:

Yes, today is Wednesday.

No, it's not my favorite food.

Sure, I'll drive you to the park.

Use commas to set off a tag question. A tag question (such as *do you?* or *can I?*) emphasizes an implied answer to the statement preceding it.

Examples:

You've never played golf before, have you?

He does know the curfew is ten o'clock, doesn't he?

Use commas to set off words or names used in direct address.

Examples:

Will you be able to pick me up on Thursday, Danielle?

Have a seat, Felicia, and I'll be right with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I present Maestro Santini.

D.1.2.4 Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works.

Punctuating Titles: When to Use *Italics*, Underlining, and "Quotation Marks."

It's easy for students to forget that different types of titles require different typographical features. It is even harder to remember which type of title requires which type of punctuation.

Despair not! If you remember these two handy rules, you can keep the difference straight:

1) Short works and parts of long works are usually in quotation marks.

2) Long works and collections of short works are usually put in italics (or underlined when handwritten).

"Short Works" & "Sections of Longer Works"

1) "Title of a Short Poem."

Ex: "The Raven."

2) "Title of a Short Story."

Ex: "Young Goodman Brown"

3) "Title of an Essay"

Ex: "The Fiction of Langston Hughes"

4) "Title of a Short Song"

Ex: "Money Talks"

5) "Title of a Skit or Monologue"

Ex: "Madman's Lament"

6) "Short Commercial"

"Obey Your Thirst."

7) Title of "Individual Episode" in a Television Series.

Ex: "Sawyer's Past"

8) "Title of a Chapter in a Book"

Ex: "Welsh Mountains"

9) "Encyclopedia Article"

Ex: "Etruscan"

Long Works & Collection of Short Works

Title of an Epic Poem or Book-Length Poem

Ex: *The Odyssey*

Title of a Novel

Ex: *The Scarlet Letter*

Title of a Collection or Anthology of Essays

Ex: *Modern Writers and Their Readers*

Title of a CD, Cassette, or Album

Ex: *The Razor's Edge*, by AC/DC.

Also: *Title of a Ballet or Opera*

Ex: *The Nutcracker Suite* or *Die Fliedermaus*

Also: *Title of Long Classical or Instrumental Compositions* Ex: Wagner's *The Flight of the Valkyries*

Title of a Play

Ex: *The Importance of Being Ernest*

Title of a Film

Ex: *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*

Title of a Television Series as a Whole

Ex: *The Lost*

Ex: *Everybody Loves Raymond*

Title of a Complete Book

Ex: *A Guide to Welsh Geography*

Title of Encyclopedia

Ex: *Encyclopedia Britannica*

- 10) "Title of an Article in a Magazine"** *Title of the Magazine.*
 Ex: "Training Your Toddler" Ex: *Parenting*
- 11) "Title of an Article in a Newspaper"** *Title of the Newspaper*
 Ex: "Man Kills Seven in Subway" Ex: *The New York Times*
- 12) "One or Two Page Handout"** *Pamphlet*
 Ex: "Old English Verbs: A One Page Guide" Ex: *The Coming Kingdom of God and the Millennium.*

A Few Final Notes:

- In past editions of MLA, *underlining* a title and *italicizing* it were considered synonymous. That is no longer the case, and the current edition of MLA favors italics. If you submit articles for publication, some proofreaders and copy editors prefer underlining to italics. The arrival of word-processing has made italics fairly easy to make, and many people think they look classier than underlining.
- Traditional religious works that are foundational to a religious group or culture are capitalized, but not italicized or underlined. For instance, note the Torah, the Bible, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and the Vedas [no italics or quotation marks].
- Visual artwork, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, mixed media, and whatnot, is italicized, never put in quotation marks. Thus, Van Gogh's *Starry Night* and Rodin's *The Thinker* both have italics.
- The one exception to this policy is the title of your own unpublished student essay at the top of the first page. You do not need to underline your own title or put it in quotation marks.

D.1.2.5 Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.

Refer to Grade 5 Word Study Documents.

D.2.1.1 Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

The Need to Combine Sentences

Sentences have to be combined to avoid the monotony that would surely result if all sentences were brief and of equal length. (If you haven't already read them, see the sections on Avoiding Primer Style and Sentence Variety.) Part of the writer's task is to employ whatever music is available to him or her in language, and part of language's music lies within the rhythms of varied sentence length and structure. Even poets who write within the formal limits and sameness of an iambic pentameter beat will sometimes strike a chord against that beat and vary the structure of their clauses and sentence length, thus keeping the text alive and the reader awake. This section will explore some of the techniques we ordinary writers use to combine sentences.

Compounding Sentences

A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses. That means that there are at least two units of thought within the sentence, either one of which can stand by itself as its own sentence. The clauses of a compound sentence are either separated by a semicolon (relatively rare) or connected by a coordinating conjunction (which is, more often than not, preceded by a comma). And the two most common coordinating conjunctions are *and* and *but*. (The others are *or*, *for*, *yet*, and *so*.) This is the simplest technique we have for combining ideas:

- Meriwether Lewis is justly famous for his expedition into the territory of the Louisiana Purchase and beyond, **but** few people know of his contributions to natural science.
- Lewis had been well trained by scientists in Philadelphia prior to his expedition, **and** he was a curious man by nature.

Notice that the *and* does little more than link one idea to another; the *but* also links, but it does more work in terms of establishing an interesting relationship between ideas. The *and* is part of the immediate language arsenal of children and of dreams: one thing simply comes after another and the logical relationship between the ideas is not always evident or important. The word *but* (and the other coordinators) is at a slightly higher level of argument.

Compounding Sentence Elements

Within a sentence, ideas can be connected by compounding various sentence elements: subjects, verbs, objects or whole predicates, modifiers, etc. Notice that when two such *elements* of a sentence are compounded with a coordinating conjunction (as opposed to the two independent clauses of a compound sentence), the conjunction is usually adequate and no comma is required.

Subjects: When two or more subjects are doing parallel things, they can often be combined as a compounded subject.

- Working together, **President Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis** convinced Congress to raise money for the expedition.

Objects: When the subject(s) is/are acting upon two or more things in parallel, the objects can be combined.

- President Jefferson believed that the headwaters of the Missouri reached all the way to the Canadian border.
- He also believed that meant he could claim all that land for the United States.
- President Jefferson believed **that** the headwaters of the Missouri might reach all the way to the Canadian border **and that** he could claim all that land for the United States.

Notice that the objects must be parallel in construction: Jefferson believed that this was true and that was true. If the objects are not parallel (Jefferson was convinced of two things: that the Missouri reached all the way to the Canadian border and wanted to begin the expedition during his term in office.) the sentence can go awry. Click [here](#) to review the principles of parallelism.

Verbs and verbals: When the subject(s) is/are doing two things at once, ideas can sometimes be combined by compounding verbs and verb forms.

- He studied the biological and natural sciences.
- He learned how to categorize and draw animals accurately.
- He **studied** the biological and natural sciences **and learned** how to categorize and draw animals accurately.

Notice that there is no comma preceding the "and learned" connecting the compounded elements above.

- In Philadelphia, Lewis learned to chart the movement of the stars.
- He also learned to analyze their movements with mathematical precision.
- In Philadelphia, Lewis learned **to chart and analyze** the movement of the stars with mathematical precision.
- *OR* — In Philadelphia, Lewis learned **to chart** the stars **and analyze** their movements with mathematical precision.

(Notice in this second version that we don't have to repeat the "to" of the infinitive to maintain parallel form.)

Modifiers: Whenever it is appropriate, modifiers such as prepositional phrases can be compounded.

- Lewis and Clark recruited some of their adventurers from river-town bars.
- They also used recruits from various military outposts.
- Lewis and Clark recruited their adventurers **from river-town bars and various military outposts.**

Notice that we do not need to repeat the preposition *from* to make the ideas successfully parallel in form.

Subordinating One Clause to Another

The act of *coordinating* clauses simply links ideas; *subordinating* one clause to another establishes a more complex relationship between ideas, showing that one idea depends on another in some way: a chronological development, a cause-and-effect relationship, a conditional relationship, etc.

- William Clark was not officially granted the rank of captain prior to the expedition's departure.
- Captain Lewis more or less ignored this technicality and treated Clark as his equal in authority and rank.
- **Although** William Clark was not officially granted the rank of captain prior to the expedition's departure, **Captain** Lewis more or less ignored this technicality and treated Clark as his equal in authority and rank.
- The explorers approached the headwaters of the Missouri.
- They discovered, to their horror, that the Rocky Mountain range stood between them and their goal, a passage to the Pacific.
- **As** the explorers approached the headwaters of the Missouri, **they** discovered, to their horror, that the Rocky Mountain range stood between them and their goal, a passage to the Pacific.

When we use subordination of clauses to combine ideas, the rules of punctuation are very important. It might be a good idea to review the definition of clauses at this point and the uses of the comma in setting off introductory and parenthetical elements.

Using Appositives to Connect Ideas

The appositive is probably the most efficient technique we have for combining ideas. An appositive or appositive phrase is a renaming, a re-identification, of something earlier in the text. You can think of an appositive as a modifying clause from which the clausal machinery (usually a relative pronoun and a linking verb) has been removed. An appositive is often, but not always, a parenthetical element which requires a pair of commas to set it off from the rest of the sentence.

- Sacagawea, ~~who was~~ one of the Indian wives of Charbonneau, ~~who was~~ a French fur-trader, accompanied the expedition as a translator.
- A pregnant, fifteen-year-old Indian woman, **Sacagawea**, one of the wives of the French fur-trader **Charbonneau**, accompanied the expedition as a translator.

Notice that in the second sentence, above, Sacagawea's name is a parenthetical element (structurally, the sentence adequately identifies her as "a pregnant, fifteen-year-old Indian woman"), and thus her name is set off by commas; Charbonneau's name, however, is essential to the meaning of the sentence (otherwise, which fur-trader are we talking about?) and is not set off by a pair of commas. Click [here](#) for additional help identifying and punctuating around parenthetical elements.

Using Participial Phrases to Connect Ideas

A writer can integrate the idea of one sentence into a larger structure by turning that idea into a modifying phrase.

- Captain Lewis allowed his men to make important decisions in a democratic manner.
- This democratic attitude fostered a spirit of togetherness and commitment on the part of Lewis's fellow explorers.
- **Allowing his men to make important decisions in a democratic manner**, Lewis fostered a spirit of togetherness and commitment among his fellow explorers.

In the sentence above, the participial phrase modifies the subject of the sentence, *Lewis*. Phrases like this are usually set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma.

- The expeditionary force was completely out of touch with their families for over two years.
- They put their faith entirely in Lewis and Clark's leadership.
- They never once rebelled against their authority.

- **Completely out of touch with their families for over two years,** the men of the expedition put their faith in Lewis and Clark's leadership **and** never once rebelled against their authority.

Using Absolute Phrases to Connect Ideas

Perhaps the most elegant — and most misunderstood — method of combining ideas is the absolute phrase. This phrase, which is often found at the beginning of sentence, is made up of a noun (the phrase's "subject") followed, more often than not, by a participle. Other modifiers might also be part of the phrase. There is no true verb in an absolute phrase, however, and it is always treated as a parenthetical element, an introductory modifier, which is set off by a comma.

The absolute phrase might be confused with a participial phrase, and the difference between them is structurally slight but significant. The participial phrase does not contain the subject-participle relationship of the absolute phrase; it modifies the subject of the independent clause that follows. The absolute phrase, on the other hand, is said to modify the entire clause that follows. In the first combined sentence below, for instance, the absolute phrase modifies the subject *Lewis*, but it also modifies the verb, telling us "under what conditions" or "in what way" or "how" he *disappointed* the world. The absolute phrase thus modifies the entire subsequent clause and should not be confused with a dangling participle, which must modify the subject which immediately follows.

- Lewis's fame and fortune was virtually guaranteed by his exploits.
- Lewis disappointed the entire world by inexplicably failing to publish his journals.
- **His fame and fortune virtually guaranteed by his exploits,** Lewis disappointed the entire world by inexplicably failing to publish his journals.
- Lewis's long journey was finally completed.
- His men in the Corps of Discovery were dispersed.
- Lewis died a few years later on his way back to Washington, D.C., completely alone.
- **His long journey completed and his men in the Corps of Discovery dispersed,** Lewis died a few years later on his way back to Washington, D.C., completely alone.

D.2.1.2 Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

Word Choice

It is important that the words you use be precise and that they express your ideas clearly. It is also important that the words you use are varied, so that you aren't using the same words again and again. This resource provides tips for checking your word choice.

Choosing Appropriate Words

Avoid the following pitfalls. First, most slang that you might use in everyday language is too casual for a formal essay. Similarly, casual language that you often use in everyday speech might create too casual a tone for an essay. Finally, clichés that we use in everyday conversation (green with envy, face the music, add insult to injury, etc.) can make your writing sound boring. Consider the paragraph and revision below.

Original Paragraph

When I started thinking about getting a new job, I was completely clueless. I knew I wanted to do something really cool, but I was lost about what might fit the bill.

Revised Paragraph

When I started thinking about getting a new job, I was overwhelmed by my options and unsure of what to choose. While I knew I wanted to do something interesting, I was uncertain of what that might be.

Choosing Precise Words

When thinking about whether the language you use conveys the meaning you want, put yourself in your reader's position. Specifically, consider the following issues:

Connotations: A connotation is an association that readers might have with a specific word. An example is the different associations brought up by the words pride and arrogance. While the two words have similar meanings, pride is generally has positive associations while arrogance carries negative associations. Consider the connotations that certain words have when choosing your language and revising for word choice.

Similar sound, different meaning: Be careful of words that sound similar but have different meanings. Some examples are alternate/alternative, intelligent/intelligible, moral/morale, portion/proportion.

General versus specific: In your writing, you will use both general and specific words. While your goal is to include both, you should try to avoid overusing words that are really general. An example is the word interesting. For example, if you describe an idea as interesting, your reader may wonder what, exactly, is interesting about it. Other examples of general words include good, thing, and some. Words like these are fine to use, but you need to add specific detail so that your writing does not become vague.

Avoiding Repetition

When proofreading your essay, look out for repetitive wording. Just as you should vary your sentence structure (see Lesson 4), you should also vary the words you use. As you write practice essays, you may even identify some words that you tend to use frequently. Just as you keep track of errors you often make, you can keep track of words that you overuse.

Identifying these words can help you avoid overusing them as you write. You can even keep a list of these words and look up possible alternatives to use in a thesaurus. Try to find a teacher to read your practice essays when you use new words, however. You want to be sure you're using a new word correctly.

Transition Words

Transition words are clues to your reader that help them follow your ideas. You can use these words to link and transition between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. For example, writers often use transition words when listing ideas, as in the following paragraph:

I prefer watching television shows instead of movies for a number of reasons. First, TV shows are shorter, so I don't spend as much time watching them as I do when watching movies. Second, TV shows are drawn out over many episodes over many seasons, so I can get to know the characters better than the characters in a two-hour movie. Finally, I like watching television shows more than watching movies because they give me something to look forward to each week.

You can use transition words for a variety of purposes aside from listing. Transition words for different purposes are listed below. Try using these in your writing to help guide readers through your essay.

- To show examples: for example, for instance
- To show sequence: first, second, third, etc., next, then, following this, finally, consequently, subsequently, thus, therefore, hence
- To add: and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.)
- To compare: but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, although, in contrast, although this may be true
- To summarize or conclude: in brief, summing up, to conclude, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, hence, therefore, thus, consequently
- To emphasize: definitely, extremely, obviously, in fact, indeed, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, never, emphatically, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably
- To show time: immediately, thereafter, soon, finally, then, later, previously, formerly, first (second, etc.), next.

D.2.1.3 Choose punctuation for effect.

Four Types of Sentences and the Effect of Punctuation

When students learn to write, they begin by learning about the four types of sentences and the role punctuation plays in determining and creating those different sentence types.

The four types of sentences in the English language include:

- Declarative sentence
- Imperative sentence
- Interrogative sentence
- Exclamatory sentence

And there are only three punctuation marks with which to end a sentence:

- Period
- Question mark
- Exclamation point

Using different types of sentences and punctuation, students can vary the tone of their writing assignments and express a variety of thoughts and emotions.

A **declarative sentence** simply makes a statement or expresses an opinion. In other words, it makes a declaration. This kind of sentence ends with a period.

Examples of this sentence type:

“I want to be a good writer.” (makes a statement)

“My friend is a really good writer.” (expresses an opinion)

An **imperative sentence** gives a command or makes a request. It usually ends with a period but can, under certain circumstances, end with an exclamation point.

Examples of this sentence type:

“Please sit down.”

“I need you to sit down now!”

An **interrogative sentence** asks a question. This type of sentence often begins with who, what, where, when, why, how, or do, and it ends with a question mark.

Examples of this sentence type:

“When are you going to turn in your writing assignment?”

“Do you know what the weather will be tomorrow?”

An **exclamatory sentence** is a sentence that expresses great emotion such as excitement, surprise, happiness and anger, and ends with an exclamation point.

Examples of this sentence type:

“It is too dangerous to climb that mountain!”

“I got an A on my book report!”

Learning about the different types of sentences and punctuation will help students become better writers by enabling them to convey various types of information and emotion in their writing.

D.2.1.4 Choose words and phrases for effect

Words are the writer's basic tools: They create the color and texture of the written work. They both reflect and determine the level of formality. They shape the reader's perceptions. Student should rarely skip words they do not know when studying serious literature. (It's like wearing earplugs to a symphony.) To understand voice, students must "hear" the words and "feel" their effects.

Diction (word choice) reflects the writer's vision and steers the reader's thought. Effective voice is shaped by words that are clear, concrete and exact. Good writers eschew words like pretty, nice, and bad. Instead, they use words that invoke a specific effect.

- A coat isn't torn; it is tattered.
- The U.S. Army does not want revenge; it is thirsty for revenge.
- A door does not shut; it thuds.

Specific diction brings the reader into the scene, enabling full participation in the writer's world. Diction depends on topic, purpose, and occasion. The topic often determines the specificity and sophistication of diction. Articles on computers are filled with specialized language: email, e-shopping, web, interface. The writer's purpose—whether to convince, entertain, amuse, inform, or plead—partly determines diction. Words chosen to impart a particular effect on the reader reflect and sustain the writer's purpose.

If the author's purpose is to inform, the reader should expect straightforward diction. If the writer's purpose is to entertain, the reader will likely encounter words used in ironic, playful, or unexpected ways.

Diction also depends on the occasion. As with clothes, level of formality influences appropriate choices. Formal diction is largely reserved for scholarly writing and serious prose or poetry. Informal diction is the norm in expository essays, newspaper editorials, and works of fiction. Colloquial diction and slang borrow from informal speech and are typically used to create a mood or capture a particular historic or regional dialect. Appropriateness of diction is determined by the norms of society.

When studying diction, students must understand both connotation (the meaning suggested by the word) and denotation (the word's literal meaning). When a writer calls a character *slender*, the word evokes a different feeling from calling the character *gaunt*. A word's power to produce a strong reaction in the reader lies mainly in its connotative meaning.

Diction can impart freshness and originality to writing. Words used in surprising or unusual ways make us rethink what is known and re-examine meaning. Good writers often opt for complexity rather than simplicity, for multiple meanings rather than precision. Thus diction, the foundation of voice, shapes a reader's thinking while guiding reader insight into the author's idiosyncratic expression of thought: the writer's voice.

Explain the differences in connotation among the members of each of the following groups of words:

- Corpulent, plump, obese, pudgy, heavy-set, fleshy, fat, paunchy, burly, overweight, roly-poly, bulky, portly, beefy.
- Mansion, abode, dwelling, domicile, residence, house, home, habitat, Hurl, throw, pitch, chuck, toss, fling, cast.
- Arrogant, stuck-up, conceited, cocky, vain, proud, self-satisfied, egotistical, overbearing, supercilious.
- Cheat, phony, con man, fraud, charlatan, operator, crook, imposter, quack, swindler.⁴
- Naked, nude, stripped, bare, unclothed, in the buff.
- Bizarre, singular, far out, outlandish, off the wall, curious, odd, unusual, extraordinary, remarkable, noteworthy, strange, eerie.
- Titter, giggle, chuckle, laugh, guffaw, roar, snicker, snigger, cackle.
- Saving, tight, miserly, frugal, economical, careful, penurious, thrifty, penny-pinching, budget-minded, prudent, mean.
- Honest, straight, on the level, veracious, guileless, unaffected, artless, genuine, candid, truthful, sincere.
- Buff, enthusiast, amateur, fan, fanatic, hobbyist, bug, connoisseur.
- Pig-headed, stubborn, obdurate, adamant, stiff-necked, rigid obstinate, unalterable, changeless, dogged, steadfast.
- Sullen, taciturn, glum, withdrawn, down, silent, reticent, wordless.
- Concise, pointed, laconic, terse, bare bones, economical, pithy, compressed, brief, boiled down.
- Steal, purloin, pinch, rip off, filch, embezzle, burglarize, rob, hold up, snatch, grab, help oneself to, appropriate.

Often two words roughly “mean” the same thing, except that one has an unfavorable, the other a favorable, connotation. Thus, although you may like to think of yourself as an idealist, people who do not sympathize with your attitudes might call you a dreamer. For the following pairs of terms, write short explanations of why you might like to be described by one term but not by the other:

- Slender/skinny
- High-strung/freaked out
- Trusting/gullible
- Firm/stubborn
- Reckless/adventurous