Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

Servei d'Ocupació de Catalunya

Writing in English

Anna Alvado Teixidó

50 horas

Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Empresa i Ocupació

Unió Europea
Fons social europeu
L'FSE inverteix en el teu futur

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Introducción

El inglés se ha convertido en el lenguaje universal de comunicación, puesto que el mundo global en el que vivimos conlleva una relación entre personas, empresas y organizaciones a escala internacional. En la actualidad, el mundo laboral está lleno de ocasiones dónde escribir, recibir o leer textos en inglés de diversa longitud es práctica habitual. En el ámbito laboral la comunicación en inglés puede abarcar documentos de cualquier tipología, como cartas, e-mails, memos, informes, y ensayos, pero también textos de carácter familiar o personal (más informales). El objetivo del curso es que el estudiante sea capaz de comunicarse por escrito en inglés, tanto en el ámbito formal como en el informal, sea cual sea el contenido y su nivel de la lengua.

Objetivos

El curso "Writing in English" tiene como objetivo la potenciación y mejora de las competencias de expresión escrita de las personas que desarrollan o quieren desarrollar esta tarea en el ámbito laboral. Los objetivos de aprendizaje son:

1. Desarrollar y ejercitar desde el punto de vista global y puntual la expresión escrita en lengua inglesa.
2. Desarrollar la capacidad del estudiante para organizar satisfactoriamente sus ideas antes de escribir.
3. Identificar y corregir los errores cometidos y adquiridos para llevar a cabo una comunicación efectiva.
4. Saber puntuar correctamente un texto en inglés

1. General Writing – Why writing skills are important?

1.1. Start Writing

There is no single best way to begin a writing project. You may want to start right in on a draft or do some preplanning. Often, simply choosing a Subject can be a challenge. You could start free writing to locate your subject and generate ideas. Or you might prefer to first gather information from other sources, or to brainstorm using the Journalists' questions.

Assigned subjects may look limiting at first, but they offer plenty of room for individual expression. Open subjects, while promising great freedom, can be daunting because they don't provide direction. Either way, you must locate your centre of interest, and find what you can say that your reader will value. To get started then, don't worry about your subject, only start writing.

When considering what to write, we often think first of ideas, but we'd do well to recall the words

1.1.1. The Journalists' Questions

The six questions traditionally asked by journalists: who? what? when? where? how? and why? All of them can be valuable aids to invention in all types of writing. By using them as probes, you'll look at your subject more closely, and as you do, you'll find pertinent things to say.

1) Who	2) What	3) When	4) Where	5) How	6) Why

The six main questions can also be broken down into subtopics. The questions and subtopics may be used in any order. Use them if and when they can help you achieve your writing purpose.

<u>Who</u>
Like the other questions, this one's value depends upon the spirit in which you use it. On the most superficial level, it might yield only a word or two: "this person I know" or `Aunt Ginny."

Subtopics help getting beyond the surfaces of people-their names, labels, sizes-takes some time and concentration, but adds vital information and force to your writing. The list below contains only a few examples of the kinds of information you can provide under the heading of "who."

Subtopics for Exploring the Question of Who

Physical Attributes	Personality Traits	Personal History	Characteristic Possessions
weight	sense of humor	religious	books
height	temper	educational	home furnishings
bone structure	friendliness	medical	athletic equipment
hair	honesty	economic	collections
eyes	generosity	military	pets
musculature	leadership	geographic	home
coordination	competitiveness	family	clothing
body language	compassion	professional	records
complexion	self-assurance	ethnic	automobile

What

The question of "what" can open up interesting avenues of exploration. A whole essay might explore what happened, some event or incident you've chosen to tell about.

Subtopics for Exploring the Question of What

What is its purpose?	What are its parts?
What is its value?	What are its causes?
What is its shape?	Is it a part of a larger whole?
What are its limits?	What is its history?
What class of things does it belong to?	What are its effects?
How is it similar to other members of its class?	What is its duration?
How does it differ from other members of its class?	What is its formal definition?
What is its color, weight, texture, sound, odor?	

When

Everything happens in time, and the question of "when" locates events in time. On the most superficial level, this could mean just giving a date and time: 2:59 p.m., Thursday, July 12, 1996.

In most writing, however, such exact fixing of time isn't necessary. "One rainy winter morning just before breakfast" may set the time nicely for one piece, while "Easter Sunday when I was thirteen years old" might do the job for another. When can also be used to show relationships in time, as when we say, "Before stepping up to the ticket booth, I stretched a little to make myself look taller." Like the other questions, "when" can be subdivided into subtopics that may help you uncover further possibilities for exploration.

Subtopics for Exploring the Question of When

When did this happen?
How often does it happen?
When had it happened previously?
When will it happen again?
Why didn't it happen at some other time?
What conditions must be met in order for it to happen?
What happened before this?
What happened after this?
What else was happening at the same time?
How would this have been different if it had happened at some other time?
How is it similar to things that have happened at other times?
Was this good or a bad time for it to happen?
When was it first noticed and last observed?
What were the characteristics of the time?
How long did it last?

Where

Everything is somewhere, and describing that place serves two important functions. Also, "where" can show how setting shapes events. Use the question "where" to orient your readers and help them know not only where things are happening but what this place is like and why it is of importance.

Subtopics for Exploring the Question of Where

What is the immediate location?
What is its size?
What is its shape?
What are its boundaries?
Of what larger area is it a part?
What does it resemble?
How do people perceive it?
What psychological or emotional associations does it have?
What is its history?
What are its dominant sights, smells, sounds?
How is the place influenced by the participants?
How do these events happen to be occurring in this place?

How

The question of "how" directs us toward method and procedure, toward process. Readers might not understand the exact nature of the action or the various parts, steps, and stages that constitute a process. The point is that "how" probes large and small actions to reveal their inner dynamics.

Subtopics for Exploring the Question of How

What is the goal of this process?
How is success measured?
What is the importance of this process?
Is it primarily a natural or a mechanical process?
Is it primarily a mental or a physical process?
What experience or training is needed?
What preparations must be made?
What equipment is needed?
How does this equipment work?
What is the order of the steps or stages?
How important is this order?
How is each step performed?
What is the level of difficulty?
What is the importance of each step in relation to the whole?
What terminology must be understood
What are the characteristic pitfalls?
What does this process resemble?

Why

More than the other questions, "why" asks for reasons, conclusions, thoughts. It asks you to analyze and explain the actions and events you're writing about. For this reason, it's less important to ask why in personal narratives than in writing about ideas.

Subtopics for Exploring the Question of Why

Why did this happen?
Why didn't something else happen?
How can we recognize a cause?
How many causes are there?
Which causes are more or less important?
Which are the direct causes?
Which are the indirect causes?
What are the surface motives?
What are the underlying motives?
Why were the motives expressed in this way?
What are the short-term objectives?
What are the long-term objectives?
Why was this method chosen to achieve the objectives?
Were the results intentional or accidental?
If accidental, what circumstances produced the accident?
Why wasn't the accident prevented?

1.1.2. Dramatism

Sometimes called the Pentad because of its five key terms, Dramatism offers a simple yet effective way to generate ideas. It resembles the Journalist's Questions and, like them, can be applied to many topics.

The Five Key Terms of Dramatism

Act:	What is happening?
Agent:	Who is doing it?
Agency:	What method is being used?
Purpose:	What is the goal, intent, objective?

Scene:	Where and when is it happening?

These questions are useful, but the true power of the Pentad comes when the key terms are combined to construct "ratios." These ratios yield a second layer of questions, often more interesting and penetrating than the first, that are called 'Pentad'.

	Act	Agent	Agency	Purpose	Scene
Act				X	
Agent				X	
Agency				X	
Purpose					
Scene				X	

The ratios of the **Pentad** can be used to create a master/subquestion pattern:

Purpose:	What was the purpose of it?
Act/Purpose:	How did the Acts of the topic relate to this purpose?
Agent/Purpose:	Who determined that this was necessary?
Agency/Purpose:	Was this an effective means of accomplishing the purpose?
Scene/Purpose:	Why this goal was considered important for someone at that time?

Another useful aid to discovering new perspectives is the following: this method uses six master topics to break any subject down into component parts.

- Contrast: The topic of contrast considers how the subject resembles or differs from others.
- Variation: The topic of variation looks at how much and in what ways the subject could change without losing its essential nature.
- Distribution: The topic of distribution asks how often and in what places the subject can be observed.
- Particle: The topic of particle identifies the distinct and defining features of the subject.
- Wave: The topic of wave considers how the subject has changed over time:

- Field: The topic of field considers the different parts of the subject and how they interact as parts of a whole.

1.1.3. Outside Sources

Unlike the other techniques, which mostly call on your internal abilities of observation and imagination, the following emphasizes investigation and research.

- At the Library
- In the Field
- Direct Observation
- Interviews
- Surveys
- On the Web

  Effective Searching - The most common search engines are:

  Google and Yahoo!

  But there are some others:

  AltaVista
  HighBeam
  HotBot
  Metasearch
  Northern Light
  About.com

2. Organising your writing

Everything has a form. In writing, the goal is to find a form that suits your material and purpose. You may sense a clear pattern emerging early in your writing process, or you may try out a few promising designs.

As you organize your writing, then, think about your composing style. Are you more of a planner or an improviser? If you're a planner, try staying open to new possibilities that appear while you're writing.

Effective organization requires you to see your subject as a whole and as a system of interrelated parts. To get a feel for the process of organization, imagine organizing a deck of cards.

If you begin with a holistic view, seeing the deck as one thing, your task is to divide that whole into meaningful groups. If you begin with an atomistic view, you need to gather those components into meaningful categories.

Analysis and Synthesis

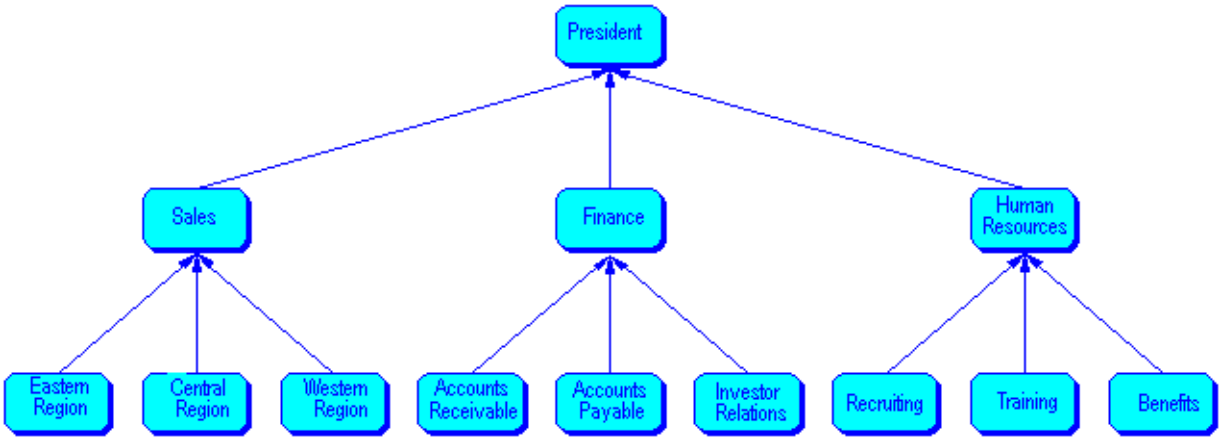
Analysis refers to dividing a whole into parts. Synthesis refers to the process of constructing a whole from an assortment of pieces. Neither way of seeing is better than other so both ways are important.

Pyramid Power

Many organizational patterns, especially outlines, are built on a hierarchical structure that classifies ideas and facts according to their level of generalization.

At the top level is the thesis. Below this are the major conceptual divisions, each of which may be further divided along paragraph lines. This is the essential pattern of the Thesis/Support Essay, which takes the pyramidal structure through four levels (thesis, topic sentence, support sentence, detail).

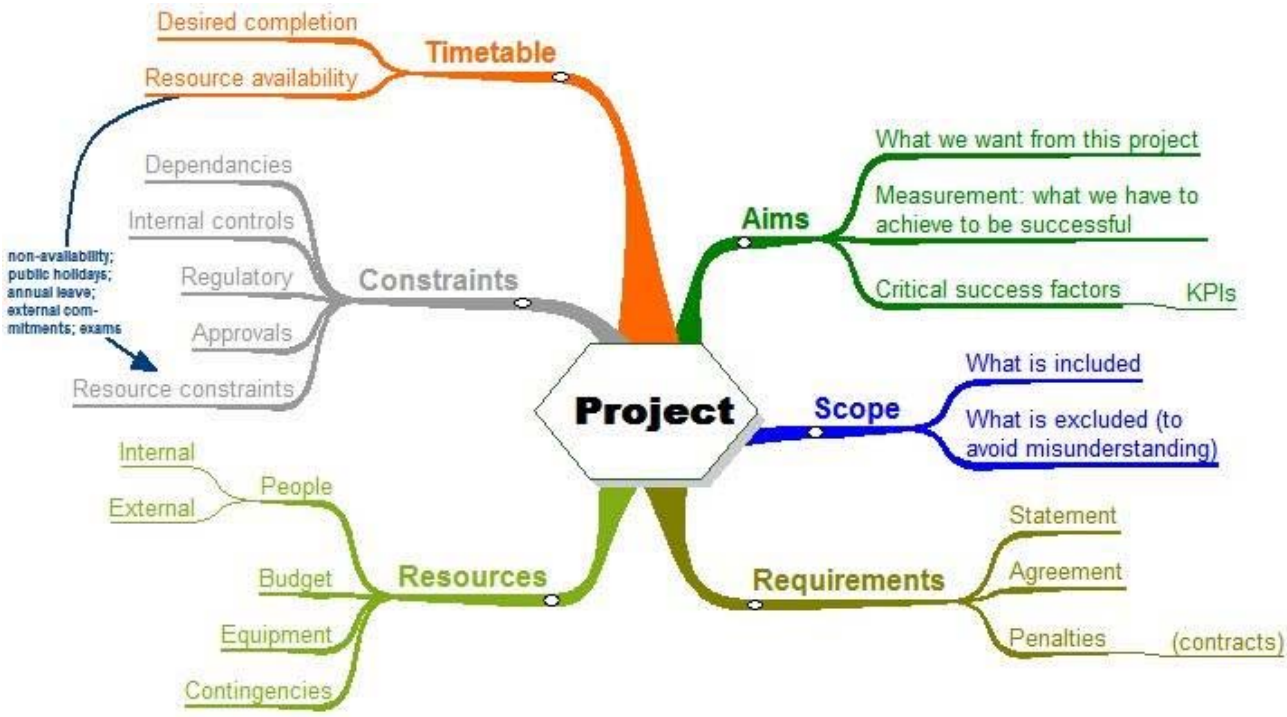
You have to determine the central, controlling principles. Then identify the major divisions, and continue the process of dividing and ranking through as many levels as necessary. In a company, could be this way:



Webs and Networks

Like pyramids, webs and networks organize ideas into meaningful clusters and identify how the clusters are related. Designs tends to be more freeform and open-ended, with less rigid ranking and with numerous cross links among categories. This sort of organization is often called 'mind mapping' or cognitive mapping:

Example of a mind map about the topic 'Project'



Source: www. almadormida.blogspot.com

Planning for Paragraphs

A paragraph is a visual cue for readers. The indentation at the beginning, like the capital letter at the start of a sentence, signals your reader that a new thought unit is about to begin. Just as sentences gather words and phrases into units of meaning, these sentences are gathered into paragraphs. The paragraphs, in turn, may be gathered into major subdivisions.

Therefore, it's good to give some thought to paragraphing as you consider overall organizational design. Let your paragraph divisions point up your organization.

- How Many?

Since paragraphs help readers see important thought units, a general guideline would be to start a new paragraph whenever you begin writing about a new organizational topic.

- How Long?

Because paragraphs are visual groupings, you also need to consider what your reader will actually see on the page. Longer paragraphs slow the tempo, asking readers to bear down and concentrate while a complex issue is discussed. A series of short paragraphs picks up the tempo and invites readers to browse or skim lightly.

A single, unbroken page of text appears under-differentiated. Readers may wonder what the point is and why they can't find it. A whole page of single sentence paragraphs appears over-differentiated. Here, too, readers may wonder what the point is and why they can't find it.

There's no set rule for how long a paragraph should be. Use long paragraphs to explore and develop ideas and shorter ones to summarize or make transitions.

> Longer paragraphs will give a feel of thoroughness and complexity.
> Shorter paragraphs will move briskly but may fragment your readers' perceptions.

Arranging and Ordering

Unlike pyramid charts and cluster maps, which can show complex organizational relationships in a single glance, your writing itself is sequential. Readers don't encounter your ideas all at once but one after another.

> Readers don't encounter your ideas all at once, but one after another.

Links - Transitional Expressions

There are some techniques that will help you emphasize the links between levels on a pyramid. These words or phrases act as signposts for readers. They usually come at the beginning of a sentence, where they show how a new thought relates to what has come before. Some common transitional expressions are listed below, according to the type of relationship they indicate:

- Contrast and qualification using expressions like:
  on the contrary, however, in contrast, still, yet, nevertheless, on the other hand
- Continuity using expressions like:
  besides, furthermore, in addition, also, secondly, to continue, next, similarly, likewise, moreover, indeed, again, in other words
- Cause/effect using expressions like:
  thus, therefore, as a result, consequently, hence, for this reason
- Exemplification using expressions like:
  for instance, for example, in fact, more specifically, to illustrate
- Summation using expressions like:
  finally, in conclusion, to sum up, in brief, lastly, as we have seen

Pronoun Reference

Pronouns stand in place of other words that have already been used. This makes them useful as transitional devices. They look back at and connect with what has come before, and in doing so they help readers see connections between thoughts. The paragraph below uses pronouns as transitional devices:

> *Pronouns stand in place of other words that have been used. This characteristic makes them very useful as transitional devices. They look back at and connect with what has come before, and in doing so they help readers see connections between thoughts.*

Key Words and Synonyms

Key words are words that refer to your central ideas. Often they appear in the subject or the verb slot of the main clause. Repeating these essential terms not only keeps them at the forefront of your readers' attention, but also helps stitch your sentences together, providing coherence and continuity between thoughts.

Sentence Patterns

Like key words, individual sentence patterns can be echoed and repeated from one place to another. Doing so helps to establish a rhyth-

mic style, and if the repetitions accentuate organizational levels, readers will have an enhanced sense of order and design. As with key words, repeated sentence patterns also need to be varied now and then. Doing so adds interest and helps prevent monotony.

2.1. Focus on the sentence

Effective sentences are vital to strong writing. They are fundamental carriers and shapers of meaning; the pulse of style. If you want to work on your sentences, try the following sections:

- Basic Sentence Concepts
- Expanding the Basic Pattern
- Six Problem Areas
- Designing Effective Sentences

Basic Sentence Concepts

Our language organizes thoughts into sentences. As a core, these sentences have a two-part structure. For simplicity and easy reference, we can represent the two parts as follows:

SUBJECT + PREDICATE

The subject, a noun or noun-substitute, tells who or what is doing something. The predicate tells what the subject is doing.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE
This bird	sings.
Marcus	plays soccer.
My old Chevy	still runs.
This pen	leaks.
These books	are heavy.

This two part structure is so basic that a thought doesn't feel complete when one part is missing. Both are needed for a complete sentence. Of course most sentences are longer and more sophisticated than those above, but even the most complex sentences are based on this two part principle. Learning to recognize it, to listen for it, and to use it are the first steps to mastering English sentence structure.

The S V/C Pattern

Another step, slightly less important but still useful, is to see that the predicate is often composed of two parts.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE
SUBJECT	VERB/COMPLEMENT

The verb is the word or cluster of words actually naming the action performed by the subject. The complement comes after the verb. It may do

a number of different things, but most often it's the receiver of the action performed by the subject and named by the verb:

SUBJECT	VERB	COMPLEMENT
John	hit	the ball.

Here John is an agent, the one doing something. "Hit" names the action he's performing, and "the ball" receives the effect of the action. Not all cases are so clear, however. Sometimes the complement modifies the subject, as in "John is tall." Here, "tall" doesn't receive the effect of the action. In fact, there doesn't seem to be any action at all, unless we consider merely existing to be an action. But such cases need not cause problems as long as we recognize the basic pattern and sense that it has been completed. For us, as writers, a detailed understanding of linguistics is secondary. Learning to use the language effectively comes first.

For now, it's enough to say that the basic pattern upon which English sentences are built is:

SUBJECT (S)	VERB (V)	COMPLEMENT (C)
William	eats	apples.
Chantal	is	happy.
People	form	governments.
Justice	serves	everyone.
Cigarettes	are	dangerous.
Running	builds	endurance.

Each of these is a simple sentence. Because it can stand by itself as a complete sentence, it's also called an independent clause. Because it often serves as the foundation of a much longer sentence, it's sometimes called a base clause. What we call it, though, is less important than learning to sense its presence in every sentence we build.

Expanding the Basic Pattern

Writing made up of only such little sentences would quickly grow monotonous and would also sound like it had been written by someone without much language experience. Fortunately, the basic S V/C pattern allows for easy expansion in almost unlimited ways.

Fortunately, the basic S V/C pattern allows for easy expansion in almost unlimited ways.

You already use the following methods of expansion, though perhaps without knowing their names. After reading about them, you'll understand some terms linguists use to describe how you build sentences, and you'll see how you can use these methods to write more effective sentences.

Modification and Subordination

The easiest and most common way of developing the S V/C pattern is by adding a modifier. To modify means to change or alter. A modifier, therefore, is a word or word group that changes the meaning of another word or word group that is more basic to the sentence.

S	V	C
Robert	eats	apples.

By adding a modifier to the complement, we can alter the meaning of "apples."

S	V	C
Robert	eats	green apples.

We can also modify the subject.

S	V	C
Little Robert	eats	green apples.

And even the verb.

S	C	V	C
Little Robert	never	eats	green apples.

Notice how the basic S V C pattern remains even after several modifiers have been added. This is because modifiers cluster around base elements like iron filings around a magnet.

The principle that describes this relationship between modifiers and more basic sentence elements is subordination. Subordination means taking a position of lesser importance or rank. In the Army, for example, a private is subordinate to a captain and a captain to a general. Likewise, when we say a modifier is subordinate to the base element, we mean it has less importance and is dependent upon that more basic element for its claim to a place in the sentence. We can see this by looking at our last example.

Little Robert never eats green apples.

When we drop all the modifiers, we still have a sentence that feels complete.

Robert eats apples.

But when we drop the base words that the modifiers depend on, we are left with something entirely different.

Little never green.

The result is nonsense. Our minds want to process the data as a sentence, but it won't fit. We have modifiers, but we don't know what is being modified. The base elements are missing.

We've seen how these two principles, modification and subordination, join individual words in clusters. It's also worth noting how they join word groups together. Just as individual words cluster around more important ones, so the clusters they form attach themselves to more important elements. Notice how this happens in the following example.

S	V	C
The river	was	cold.

Adding a little modification, we get this:

S	V	C
The recently thawed river	was	icy cold.

"Recently" modifies "thawed," while the two words join together to modify "river," the base word of the cluster. Whole sentences can be joined in this way:

Although the recently thawed river was icy cold, we dove right in.

Now the former sentence, which was also an independent clause, has become a part of a larger whole. It is now subordinate to "we dove right in," which becomes the new base clause of the sentence. Without our base clause we would be left with a subordinate element that had no independent element to depend on, like an orphan.

Modification and subordination can help you in two ways: first, they can help you understand how your sentence elements relate to each other and to the sentence as a whole; second, they're important tools for combining those elements into more complex and sophisticated sentences.

Coordination

The basic S V/C pattern can also be expanded by coordination. Whereas subordination ranks one element as more important than the other, coordination places elements on an equal footing. If the relationship of subordination is that of child to parent, the relationship of coordination is that of spouse to spouse. In a sentence it works like this:

S	V/C
Esther	types/letters.

The subject can be expanded by adding a coordinate element:

S	V/C
Lois and Esther	type/letters.

And coordination can also be used to expand the complement.

S	V/C
Lois and Esther	type/letters and memos.

Or the verb:

Lois and Esther type letters and memos but write-out short notes and signatures.

Now each element has been compounded with a resulting structure that might be represented as follows:

S	V/C
Lois and Esther	type/letters and memos
but	
	write-out/short notes and signatures.

This sentence has a compound subject, a compound verb, and two compound complements. In every case the compound elements are coordinate to each other and therefore, because they are of equal importance, may be said to balance.

And just as we can subordinate either individual words or whole groups of words, the same is true of coordination. In the previous example we compounded the various parts of a single independent clause, but we could also coordinate two separate clauses.

S	V/C		S	V/C
Esther	types/letters,	but	Lois	types/memos.

Now our sentence has two independent clauses, each of which could stand alone as a complete sentence.

<u>Substitution</u>

A third way of expanding the basic pattern is substitution, which means replacing a single word with a word group. Again, an example will help.

S	V	C
I	saved	my classwork.

By substituting, we can expand the complement to read:

S	V	/C
I	saved	/what I learned, which wasn't much.

"My classwork" has been expanded to "what I learned". As you can see, this adds more words without adding much meaning and so could be objected to as uneconomical. Still it's a perfectly grammatical way of expanding sentences, and there may be times when it will suit your needs exactly, either to give emphasis or to improve sound and rhythm.

Sometimes, as in the example below, you can use substitution to clarify or summarize your thoughts:

Change:

Harold and Arthur earn more than I do. This makes me furious.

to:

Getting paid less than my male coworkers makes me furious.

Summary

English sentences are built upon the foundation of an independent base clause consisting of two parts, a subject and a predicate. This simple pattern may be expanded in three ways:

- First, subordinate modifiers may be added to one of the main elements or to the base clause as a whole.
- Second, words or phrases may be coordinated with existing elements.
- Third, you may sometimes want to substitute a word group for an individual word. Finally, you can often use subordination, coordination, and substitution together to expand a single base clause.

Connectors

Besides the uses already described, coordination and subordination are two basic ways of linking clauses. Sometimes we don't have much choice about how to make the connection, but often, if we see the options, we do.

These trees lose their leaves every winter, but they don't die.

The clauses in the example above are joined by coordination, but could as easily have been joined by subordination.

Although these trees lose their leaves every winter, they don't die.

Now, the first clause is subordinate to the second. The two words that make the difference are called conjunctions, or joining words.

"But", belongs to a group of conjunctions that coordinate both clauses.
"Although" belongs to a group that subordinates.

Learning to recognize these two groups of conjunctions will not only help you with your sentence structure, but also with your punctuation.

Coordinating Conjunctions
and, or, but, for, nor, yet, so
They can always be found at the point where the two coordinate structures are joined together.

Subordinating Conjunctions
if, although, as, when, because, since, though, whenever, after, unless, while, whereas, even though.

When one of these words is attached to the beginning of an independent clause, that clause is weakened. It becomes dependent. It can no longer stand alone as a complete sentence.

Independent clause (complete sentence):
The streets were covered with snow.
Dependent clause (fragment):
Because the streets were covered with snow.
Dependent clause attached to a base clause (complete sentence):
Because the streets were covered with snow, we could ski to school.

Designing Effective Sentences

Now we'll look at some more advanced sentence strategies. The aim is to increase your versatility as a writer.

While the S V/C pattern, with agent as subject, is by far the most common pattern for building English sentences, it's by no means the only one. Sometimes you may wish to turn things around in order to create a particular kind of emphasis or rhythm:

She always caught fly balls. She usually missed grounders.
Fly balls she always caught. Grounders she usually missed.

Sometimes you'll see more than one possible variation:

My bicycle stood by the tree.
By the tree stood my bicycle.
By the tree my bicycle stood.

Such inverted sentences can be used to vary the rhythm or shift your reader's attention to an important word or phrase. When used carelessly or too often, however, they can produce an artificial, even awkward style.

Expletives and Passive Constructions

These constructions can drain your style of vigor and confuse meaning. These common sentence patterns are undeniably useful, but overused

by beginners who don't see that these constructions can drain their style of vigor and confuse meaning.
Expletives, as the term is used here, are words used primarily to take up space. They fill a slot in a sentence or round out a rhythm. Their meaning isn't important. They're commonly placed in the subject slot when a writer either doesn't know or doesn't want to name the agent. Notice how "it" and "there" work in the following examples.

With expletive: It has been decided that we will meet next Monday.
Without expletive: We have decided to meet next Monday.

With expletive: There are good job opportunities in computer science.
Without expletive: Computer science offers good job opportunities.

In both cases the second choice is more economical, more direct, and therefore preferable for most situations. Another concern with expletives as subjects is subject-verb agreement. Because "there" is neither singular nor plural, it can't tell you whether you'll need a singular or a plural verb.

Not in agreement: There's two good catchers on our team.
In agreement: There are two good catchers on our team.

In passive constructions the subject is the receiver of the action rather than the agent. Like constructions that open with expletives, passives can be useful when you wish to emphasize the results of an action or when you don't want to draw attention to the doer of the action.

Passive: Most of those mansions were built by wealthy lumber barons.
Active: Wealthy lumber barons built most of those mansions.

Which is stronger? It's hard to say. The truth is that the second sentence is slightly shorter, but the guiding factor here probably would be whether the writer wanted to emphasize the mansions or the lumber barons. Passive voice most often causes problems when it adds unnecessary words without producing any clear benefits.

Balance and Parallelism

Balance in sentences is similar to balance in other areas of life. Imagine a high- Balance in sentences is wire artist above the circus ring's sawdust similar to balance in floor, placing one foot carefully in front of another, holding a long pole crosswise, other areas of life, exactly in the middle. Now read the following sentence, and notice how it does a kind of balancing act as it moves forward:

From Lowman to Cape Horn the weather was rainy,
but from Cape Horn to Stanley it was clear.

Here the balance point is the coordinator "but." Probably you can feel how it centres the sentence.

From to the weather was _____,
but from _____ to _____ it [the weather] was clear.

The two independent clauses balance each other, and the balance is further emphasized by the prepositional phrase that opens each clause. The structure and even certain key words from one sentence part are repeated in another. That patterned repetition is the key to balance. These are easier to see and recognize than to analyze and understand.

A few more examples may be helpful:

The men wore coats and ties, and the ladies wore long dresses and heels.
The men wore coats and ties, the ladies, long dresses and heels.

Some people may find such elaborately balanced structures too artificial, even too repetitious.

Periodic and Cumulative Structure

Which sentence has the base clause at the beginning? Notice how the following sentences differ:

If you're the kind of person who likes to cry at the movies, you'll love Casablanca.
You'll love Casablanca if you're the kind of person who likes to cry at movies.

Which sentence has the base clause at the end? That sentence is periodic. When speaking of periodic structure, we'll call the elements leading up to the base clause leaders.

Which sentence has the base clause at the beginning? That sentence is cumulative. When speaking of cumulative structure, we'll call the elements following the base clause trailers.

Periodic structure:

If you're the kind of person who likes to cry at the movies, (leader)
you'll love Casablanca. (base clause)

Cumulative structure:

You'll love Casablanca (base clause)
if you're the kind of person who likes to cry at movies. (trailer)

Some sentences, like the following, use both leaders and trailers and therefore are not purely periodic or cumulative, but rather a combination:

After three triple cheeseburgers, two orders of fries, and two steins of beer, I rose slowly, holding onto the edge of the table while I contemplated the chaos in my belly.

Can you find the base clause in that sentence? Which is the leader and the trailer? Try switching the parts around, putting the trailer first and the leader last. What do you think of the results?

Periodic Structure

Beginning with a leader, besides adding variety to your sentence patterns, can help keep your reader's attention level high. So accustomed are we to reading sentences built on the S VC pattern that we start, almost immediately, to look for a base clause. Of course we aren't aware that we're looking for this, but until we find it, our attention level is especially high.

As a matter of fact, this unconscious need to locate the base clause is why you often need to set off introductory elements with a comma, to signal that the leader is done and the base clause about to begin. Notice the difference:

After he had eaten my brother got sick.
After he had eaten, my brother got sick.
My brother got sick after he had eaten.

The first sentence keeps our attention level high clear through to the end, but it causes unnecessary confusion along the way. The second sentence indicates with a comma that the leader is complete. The third sentence is clear and correct, but lacks the energy of the second.

Now look at the following two sentences:

Between the time I graduated from high school and the time I was discharged from the Navy, I never thought about my future.

I never thought about my future between the time I graduated from high school and the time I was discharged from the Navy.

The first sentence uses the leader to establish a time interval and arouse curiosity about what happened during that time. Then the base clause fills the gap. The second sentence, however, fills the gap before it's created, and the information about the timeframe is like an afterthought. Instead of building toward a strong ending, the sentence fades into insignificance.

Relative Clauses

One effective way of combining ideas into a single sentence is to place one of the ideas in a relative clause. This means that one of the ideas is joined to the base clause with a relative pronoun, such as who, whom, whose, which, or that.

Uncombined:
Albert Einstein suffered from dyslexia. Albert Einstein formulated the theory of relativity.
Changing:

Albert Einstein suffered from dyslexia. (who) formulated the theory of relativity.
Combined:
Albert Einstein, who formulated the theory of relativity, suffered from dyslexia.
You can see how our substitution of the relative pronoun "who" for "Albert Einstein" allows us to fold one sentence into the other. You may have noticed also that the second sentence could have served as the carrier and the first as the relative. Thus you could write either of the following, depending on what you wanted to emphasize.

Albert Einstein, who formulated the theory of relativity, suffered from dyslexia.
or:
Albert Einstein, who suffered from dyslexia, formulated the theory of relativity.

Both sentences are correct, and it's hard to say which is better. The effects of the sentences are very different. The first emphasizes Einstein's dyslexia, and the second emphasizes his formulation of the theory of relativity.

Choosing a relative pronoun needn't be difficult if you remember a few guidelines:

1. 'Who' and 'whom' are used to refer to people.
   The one who pays the piper calls the tune.
   Uncle Teddy, whom you haven't met, is a rare bird.

2. 'Whose' is used to show possession.
   I caught a ride with Tony, whose car barely made it up the hill.

3. The word 'Which' is used to refer to animals and things.
   Their guacamole, which I had never tasted before, turned out to be delicious.
   The white cat, which Susan left behind in her move, took up residence in an abandoned car.

4. 'That' is used to refer to animals, things, and people.
   The dream that I didn't nurture finally died.
   The wild horses that roam central Oregon are becoming a problem.
   The little girl that I'm looking for is my daughter.

The relative pronoun, especially with whom and that, may be omitted, making the sentence more compact and less formal.

The very people whom the senator held in contempt voted him out of office.
The very people the senator held in contempt voted him out of office.
Or:
Alex returned the book that I had checked out from the library.
Alex returned the book I had checked out from the library.

Participial Phrases

Participial phrases are so convenient and effective, they deserve a closer look.

Ruined by the recession, Mr. Smith closed the door to his shop, turning the key in the lock.

The preceding contains two participial phrases, one at the beginning and one at the end, and the base clause is between them. Read the following fragments and notice what they are missing.

Mr. Smith ruined by the recession.
Mr. Smith turning the key in the lock.

There are two different kinds of participles: present and past.

- A present participle is formed by adding -ing to the verb stem. The result is the form that would be used with the helping verb is.
- The past participle is the verb form that would be used with the helping verb have, and it is usually, but not always, formed by adding -ed to the verb stem. The chart below shows how this works.
-

Verb Stem	Present Participle	Past Participle
form	(is) forming	(have) formed
lose	(is) losing	(have) lost
climb	(is) climbing	(have) climbed
ring	(is) ringing	(have) rung

While the participle can't serve as the main verb of a sentence without its helper, it can be used, either alone or in combination with other words, as a modifier:

[Formed over ten thousand years ago,] these lava beds have changed very little.
Every evening we could hear a bell [ringing somewhere in the distance.]

In the preceding sentences, the bracketed word groups are called participial phrases. Also, notice the possibilities for confusion in the following sentences.

Bill found a rusty pocket knife climbing the volcano.
Curling gently around the mountains, Sarah watched the clouds.

In both cases, confusion results from the fact that the phrases are positioned too far from the words they modify.

3. Language style: Informal and Formal

Native speakers speak either formal or informal language without thinking about it. So they never think about when it is appropriate to use either style. Basically Informal English is used when speaking the language, but more formal English is used when people are writing English within the context of business or when a formal letter is required.

Moreover, there are some other styles in English:

- Plain Style
- Middle Style
- Grand Style

Plain Style

Also known as *lower style* or *simple*, in classical rhetoric, is the speech or writing that is simple, direct, and unambiguous. In contrast to the grand style, the plain style does not rely heavily on figurative language and is commonly associated with the straightforward delivery of information. The central values of the plain style are clarity and brevity.

Middle Style

An accepted middle style exists for any form of writing you can think of: news stories in the newspaper, scholarly articles in the sciences or humanities, historical narratives, Web logs, legal decisions, romance or suspense novels, CD reviews in Rolling Stone, medical case studies.

The Middle Style resembles the plain in striving to communicate truth to the understanding with clearness, and resembles the grand in aiming to influence the feelings and passions. It is bolder and more profuse in the employment of figures and the various emphatic verbal forms, than the simple style; but does not use those appropriate to intense feelings, that are found in the grand style.

This style is employed in all compositions intended not only to inform and convince, but at the same time to move the feelings and passions.

Grand Style

Also known as high style, in classical rhetoric, is the kind of speech or writing that is characterized by a heightened emotional tone, imposing diction, and highly ornate figures of speech. The 'grand' style of oratory is commonly described as magnificent, stately, opulent, and ornate.

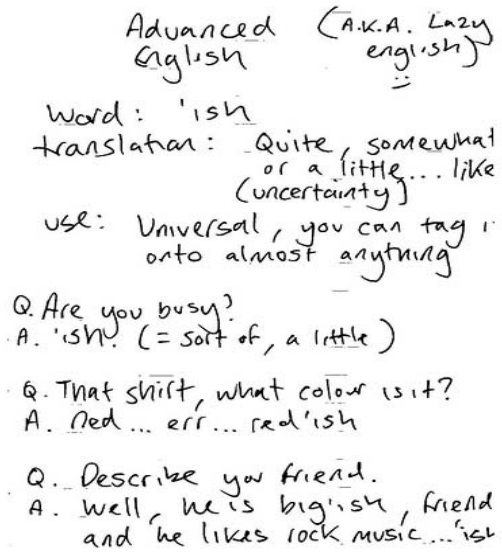
Roman rhetoricians generally advocated the use of the plain style for teaching, the middle style for pleasing, and the grand style for moving an audience.

Informal style

Speech or writing marked by a casual, familiar, and generally colloquial use of language. An informal writing style is often more direct than a formal style and may rely more heavily on contractions, abbreviations, short sentences, and ellipses.

Informal English would be the English that local communities use, with all the idiomatic, slangy and quirky richness. It is used in conversation with friends, and can also be intimate language. Informal English language is very friendly but it is not viewed as being suitable within the formal business meeting.

The reason for use of informal English may be to save time or to be casual. With informal English, the speaker feels comfortably. Informal and formal English are tendencies to language. They are used as styles of expressions only. It is possible to be serious while using informal language and it is possible to be silly or comical using informal language.



Formal style

This is a broad term for speech or writing marked by an impersonal, objective, and precise use of language. A formal prose style is typically used in scholarly books and articles, technical reports, research papers, and legal documents. Contrast with informal style.

Also, formal English would be "standard English", and would be of more importance in written communication. Standard English would be the use of vocabulary and grammar that is as free as possible from idiomatic,

slang or other specialized use that would not be universally accepted or understood by fluent speakers world-wide.

Formal language is English language that is formal in nature. It is clearly spoken, polite and grammatically correct. It is often used when the listener or reader is an important person or if the subject matter is of an important nature. Also is used to make an impression or to show respect.

Formal and informal speech and writing

Formal speech and writing is sometimes different from informal speech and writing. In English there are certain words and structures which are mostly used in formal situations. There are also certain words and structures for informal situations.

Use of Contraction

Contracted auxiliary verbs and negatives are common in informal speech and writing. They are not normally used in formal situations.

- He has gone. (Formal)
- He's gone. (Informal)
- I am ready. (Formal)
- I'm ready. (Informal)

Use of prepositions

Prepositions can come at the end of certain structures in informal language. This is not possible in formal language.

- Which nation does she belong to? (Informal)
- To which nation does she belong? (Formal)

Use of relative pronouns

In informal speech, the relative pronoun can be dropped when it is the object of the clause.

- The woman who you are talking about is my boss. (Formal)
- The woman you are talking about is my boss. (Informal)
- The movie which I saw yesterday was really nice. (Formal)
- The movie I saw yesterday was really nice. (Informal)

You can usually decide whether a relative pronoun is an object because it is normally followed by another subject + verb.

Use of determiners

Some determiners are followed by singular verbs in formal language and plural verbs in informal language.

- Neither of the answers is correct. (Formal)
- Neither of the answers are correct. (Informal)

Informal use of object forms

In informal English, we use object forms not only as the objects of verbs and prepositions, but also in most other cases where the

words do not come before the verbs as their subjects. Object forms are common, for example in one-word answers and after be.

- 'Who said that?' '(It was) him.' (Informal)
- 'Who's that?' 'It's me.' (Informal)

In a more formal style, we often use subject form + verb.

- 'Who said that?' 'He did.'

It is possible to use a subject form after be, but this is extremely formal, and is usually considered over-correct.

- It is I (Very formal)
- It is me. (Informal)
- It is he. (Very formal)
- It is him. (Informal)

Whom in questions

Whom is not often used in informal English. We prefer to use who as an object, especially in questions.

- Who did they arrest?
- Who did you go with?

We use whom in a more formal style; and we must use whom after a preposition.

- Whom did they arrest? (Formal)
- With whom did you go? (Very formal)

Ellipsis

Ellipsis (leaving out words) is more common in informal language. Compare:

- Have you seen Mr John? (Formal)
- Seen John? (Informal)
- We think that it is possible. (Formal)
- We think it's possible. (Informal)

Informal	**Formal**
They did an experiment	The experiment was carried out / performed
Then the Drive Manager goes through some steps to install the programme	The Drive Manager then performs /executes a series of functions /operations in order to install the programme
One after the other	At regular intervals
They found out what the important things were	They determined/discovered/ established/ identified the important propeties/ characteristics/issues
You can find out all about the survey on page 7	Details of the survey are to be found on page 7
We think you should discuss the research findings at the next departmental meeting	It is recommended that the research findings are discussed at the next departmental meeting

Doctors have come up with a new method of….	Doctors have established a new method of….
Safety officers are looking into the problem	Safety officers are investigating the problem
The cost of cleaning services has gone up 25% over the last three years	The cost of cleaning services has risen by 25% over the last three years
We do not think it is a good idea to do anything at the moment	It is suggested that no action should be taken at this stage
Many thanks to the staff at "Computers R Us" for their help on the technical side	Thanks are extended to the staff at "Computers R Us" for their technical support. (*Slightly less formal:* We would like to thank ….)
You need to get the patient's help when doing these hearing tests	When conducting these audiological tests, the active participation of the patient being tested is required.
There were no big differences between the three different groups we tested	No significant differences emerged between the three different groups tested
A lot of	Many / much / a great deal of
This seemed to fix the problem	This appeared to rectify the problem
Enough	Sufficient
This shows that …	This demonstrates…
Numbers are going up	Numbers are increasing
They put the plan into action	The plan was implemented / carried out
This let them keep the same temperature during the whole experiment	This allowed / permitted / resulted in / ensured a constant temperature throughout the experiment / for the entire experiment
These results are because of factors like weight, age …	These results are dependent on factors such as weight, age …

<u>Some more examples:</u>

- Informal: kids, guy, awesome, a lot, etc.
- Formal: children, man/boy, wonderful, many, etc.
- Informal: can't, won't, shouldn't, etc.
- Formal: can not, will not, should not, etc.
- Here is an example of formal English that you read in books:
- As the price of fours dollars was reasonable, I decided to make the purchase without further thought.
- The same sentence would be said quite differently in informal English. Here's an actual example that you will hear from a young American:
- It was, like, four bucks, so I was like "okay".

Occasions for Informal Essays

A thoughtful letter to an old friend, a reflection on your education or ethnic heritage, childhood reminiscence—these could all be informal essays. In writing, informality depends less on subject or structure than on the writing context. Informal essays assume a personal stance. They suggest close connections among writer, reader, and subject.

It's a kind of writing that helps us learn who we are as people, helps us define our values and clarify our vision. Whatever the subject, and it could be almost anything, the writer is part of it, perhaps the central figure exploring a personal ritual or an arctic island, maybe a background figure attending a Grateful Dead concert or watching an elephant die. In any case, we enter the writer's mind. We experience the writer's emotions. It's a kind of writing that helps us learn who we are as people, helps us define our values and clarify our vision.

Like fiction and poetry, informal essays are imaginative excursions, and so, are sometimes called "creative nonfiction." Henry David Thoreau, Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, James Baldwin, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Barry Lopez are some writers of informal essays whose work you might know already or enjoy discovering.

4. Letters in English

Many people with English as a second language worry that their writing is not advanced enough for business writing. This is not the case. An effective letter in business uses short, simple sentences and straightforward vocabulary. The easier a letter is to read, the better. You will need to use smooth transitions so that your sentences do not appear too choppy.

Salutation

First and foremost, make sure that you spell the recipient's name correctly. You should also confirm the gender and proper title. Use **Ms.** for women, and **Mr.** for men. Use **Mrs.** if you are 100% sure that a woman is married. Under less formal circumstances, or after a long period of correspondence it may be acceptable to address a person by his or her first name. When you don't know the name of a person and cannot find this information out you may write, "To Whom It May Concern". It is standard to use a comma (colon in North America) after the salutation. It is also possible to use no punctuation mark at all. Here are some common ways to address the recipient:

- Dear Mr Powell,
- Dear Ms Mackenzie,
- Dear Frederick Hanson:
- Dear Editor-in-Chief:
- Dear Valued Customer
- Dear Sir or Madam:
- Dear Madam
- Dear Sir,
- Dear Sirs
- Gentlemen:

First paragraph

In most types of business letter it is common to use a friendly greeting in the first sentence of the letter. Here are some examples:

- I hope you are enjoying a fine summer.
- Thank you for your kind letter of January 5th.
- I came across an ad for your company in *The Star* today.
- It was a pleasure meeting you at the conference this month.
- I appreciate your patience in waiting for a response.

After your short opening, state the main point of your letter in one or two sentences:

- I'm writing to enquire about...
- I'm interested in the job opening posted on your company website.
- We'd like to invite you to a member's only luncheon on April 5th.

Second and third paragraphs

Use a few short paragraphs to go into greater detail about your main point. If one paragraph is all you need, don't write an extra paragraph just to make your letter look longer. If you are including sensitive material, such as rejecting an offer or informing an employee of a layoff period, embed this sentence in the second paragraph rather than opening with it. Here are some common ways to express unpleasant facts:

- We regret to inform you...
- It is with great sadness that we...
- After careful consideration we have decided...

Final paragraph

Your last paragraph should include requests, reminders, and notes on enclosures. If necessary, your contact information should also be in this paragraph. Here are some common phrases used when closing a business letter:

- I look forward to...
- Please respond at your earliest convenience.
- I should also remind you that the next board meeting is on February 5th.
- For futher details...
- If you require more information...
- Thank you for taking this into consideration.
- I appreciate any feedback you may have.
- Enclosed you will find...
- Feel free to contact me by phone or email.

Closing

Here are some common ways to close a letter. Use a comma between the closing and your handwritten name (or typed in an email). If you do not use a comma or colon in your salutation, leave out the comma after the closing phrase:

- Yours truly,

- Yours sincerely,
- Sincerely,
- Sincerely yours
- Thank you,
- Best wishes
- All the best,
- Best of luck
- Warm regards,

How to write well?

Dictionaries may be bloated with over 500,000 words, but to write correct English you only need around 2000 different words as part of your vocabulary. Knowing where to place these words and how to use them correctly make us good writers.

- **Use familiar words**

The rules of good English are simple. Use smaller and familiar words instead of big and unfamiliar words. Note that great writers and thinkers always use simple words. By using simple words in your writing, you make it easier for the reader to understand what you are trying to express. So don't be overwhelmed by all those unknown words in the dictionary. Learn only a small fraction of them number and you will still be able to write well.

Good writing makes you sound intelligent and look professional. As you probably know these two benefits will significantly improve your personal and professional life.

- **Learn grammar and spelling**

Follow the rules of grammar and spelling. To be a good writer you should have a decent command over grammar and spelling rules. Spelling and grammatical mistakes will make you look unprofessional. So brush up on Basic English Grammar before you start writing.

- **Write short sentences**

Write short sentences. Avoid writing long, winding sentences. Short sentences are easy to construct and they are less likely to contain grammatical mistakes.

- **Get your facts right.**

If you misinform readers about facts they will consider your writing unprofessional. So get your facts right.

While it may be acceptable in e-mail or in chat rooms, excessive colloquialism can diminish the quality of a formal written text. Presentation may be improved by applying the following techniques:

Informal English

- Utilize the words "contraption," "fire," "kid," "how come," and "quote" as a noun
- May sound more like conversation
- May make listeners feel more comfortable
- Can use words as "cute", "yeah," "how-do-you-do," and "movie"
- Use of slang

Formal English

- Might prefer "device," "dismiss," "child," "why," and "quotation."
- May be more polished
- Avoid common colloquial words and expressions (colloquialisms), use "adorable", film
- Avoid slang such as "cool," "dude," and "humongous".
- Avoid "you know" and "you might be thinking." And "Think about it."
- The adverb "pretty," meaning "relatively," "fairly," or "quite," is unacceptable in all formal writing.
- Do not use contractions.
- Avoid the first and second person
- Phrases such as "I think that" can be deleted from a sentence. The pronoun "I" is replaced by the pronoun "we"; this is known as the royal we or the editorial we. Formal writing generally avoids the pronoun "you" when it refers to people in general.
- Split infinitives are common in legal writing, rule that is based on Latin.
- Separate the auxiliary (helping) verb and the main verb.
- Always include the relative pronoun.
- "whom" or "that" even when they are not essential to your meaning.
- Do not start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction.
- Develop short, choppy sentences into longer, more graceful sentences.
- Avoid *clichés* to be formal.
- Avoid stage directions.
- Avoid vague words.

WRITING TIPS

Use appropriate punctuation. For example, American English employs a colon in a formal letter as in "Dear John:" but British English employs a comma, "Dear John,"

Formal writing generally avoids the pronoun "you" when it refers to people in general.

You should sleep eight hours each night. (informal)

One should sleep eight hours each night. (formal)

Most people should sleep at least eight hours each night. (formal usage allowing for exceptions)

Always include the relative pronoun.

This is the paper I wrote. (informal)

This is the paper that I wrote. (formal)

That was the paper written by me. (formal)

(This version uses the past participle and does not contain a relative clause. It is the most formal version because it does not contain any verbs in the active voice.)

The bear that was dancing was graceful. (formal)

The bear dancing was graceful. (more formal) ("Dancing" is not active; it is not even a verb and is actually an adjective; this becomes clearer when the sentence is rewritten as "The dancing bear was graceful.")

Avoid clichés to be formal. Formal writing tries to use literal language that will not be misunderstood by any of the readers. Clichés can make your writing unoriginal, but they can sometimes be fun in casual writing, especially as an original play-on-words called an *anti-cliché*. Here are some clichés to avoid in formal writing:

Hercules was as strong as an ox.

I have to give *an arm and a leg* to find a parking spot during the holiday season.

It was as pretty as a picture.

Avoid stage directions. Do not commence a letter by telling the recipient what you plan to do in the letter or begin an essay by telling the reader what the paper will discuss.

"I am writing to you to ask you to. . . ."

"This paper is going to talk about how. . . ."

Avoid vague words. Vague words are less formal and are open to interpretation; they do not express your ideas as well as more precise words would. "A few" or "enough" can often be replaced by something more precise.

Anybody, anyone – "Anyone" and its variants are more formal than "anybody" and its variants.

I didn't see anybody.

I saw no one.

As – "As" is often utilized in formal writing to mean "because." Placing a comma before "as" can help prevent ambiguity when it could also be understood to mean "when" or "where."

Big, large, great – All three of these words are acceptable in formal English, but "large" is more formal than "big," and "great" is more formal than "large."

Fellow – Avoid using "fellow" when you mean "a person." Calling someone a fellow is more formal than calling him or her a dude, but "fellow" is still a colloquialism.

For sure – Replace "for sure" with "with certainty" in formal writing, as in "I know with certainty." You might also write, "I am positive" or "I am sure."

Get – Avoid all forms of this verb in formal writing.

I got an A in the course.

I received an A in the course.

She didn't get the joke.

She did not understand the joke.

The machine never gets used.

The machine is never used.

Got – "Got" is a colloquialism. Replace it with "have," as in "Do you have [not "got"] an extra pen?"

Introduce, present – "Present" is more formal than "introduce." It is also more respectful to the

person presented.

The queen was introduced. . . .

The queen was presented. . . .

Kind of, sort of – "Kind of" and "sort of" are unacceptable in formal writing when used for "somewhat" and "rather." When used to categorize something, "kind of" and "sort of" are acceptable, but "type of" is more formal: "The parakeet is a type of bird." Note that it is informal to include an article after "of": "The parakeet is a type of *a* bird."

Let – When used in place of "allow" or "permit," "let" is a colloquialism.

Madam, ma'am – Both "madam" and "ma'am" are very polite forms of address . . . but "ma'am" is unacceptable in formal English. In fact, "ma'am" is much more informal than other contractions such as "I'm" and "I'll," which go unmarked in dictionaries.

Most – In formal English, do not use "most" for "almost." You should write, "Almost everyone likes pizza," not "Most everyone likes pizza."

On the other hand – "On the other hand" is a very common phrase, but can be considered a *cliché* and should, therefore, be avoided in extremely formal English. Instead, use "conversely" or "by contrast." "On the other hand" is particularly useful in everyday writing and can eliminate the temptation to start with "but."

So – Avoid using "so" as a synonym for "very" in extremely formal writing. In perfectly formal writing, you also should avoid using "so" as a coordinating conjunction. You can eliminate this colloquialism by deleting "so" and beginning the sentence with "because." Compare "The song may bother me, so I'll cover my ears" and "Because the song may bother me, I shall cover my ears." Sometimes, you need the conjunction "that" after "so," as in "I wrote this how-to so that you could improve your grammar and style."

Thus, thusly – Usually, the words ending "-ly" are more formal. For example, "firstly" is more formal than "first." In particular, formal English uses "firstly," "secondly," et cetera to discuss arguments, one by one. This is not the case for "thus," though; in formal writing, use "thus," not "thusly."

Yours truly – Ironically, signing a letter "Yours truly" is formal, but referring to yourself as "yours truly" is informal. Still, "Sincerely" is a more formal signature than "Yours truly" because it avoids the second person. "Yours truly" can be very useful in informal English because the proper pronouns sometimes sound wrong. You can say, "It's yours truly!" instead of "It's me!" because "yours truly" can be used for "I" and "me."

Don't forget to include the date. Day-Month-Year is conventional in many countries; however, to avoid confusion, write out the month instead of using numbers (e.g. July 5th, 2007)

4.1. Informal letters

Personal letters, also known as friendly letters, and social notes normally have five parts.

1. The Heading. This includes the address, line by line, with the last line being the date. Skip a line after the heading. The heading is indented to the middle of the page. If using preaddressed stationery, add just the date.

2. The Greeting. The greeting always ends with a comma. The greeting may be formal, beginning with the word "dear" and using the person's given name or relationship, or it may be informal if appropriate.

Formal: Dear Uncle Jim, Dear Mr. Wilkins,

Informal: Hi Joe, Greetings,

(Occasionally very personal greetings may end with an exclamation point for emphasis)

3. The body. Also known as the main text, this includes the message you want to write. Normally in a friendly letter, the beginning of paragraphs is indented. If not indented, be sure to skip a space between paragraphs. Skip a line after the greeting and before the close.

4. The complimentary close. This short expression is always a few words on a single line. It ends in a comma. It should be indented to the same column as the heading. Skip one to three spaces (two is usual) for the signature line.

5. The signature line. Type or print your name. The handwritten signature goes above this line and below the close. The signature line and the handwritten signature are indented to the same column as the close. The signature should be written in blue or black ink. If the letter is quite informal, you may omit the signature line as long as you sign the letter.

Postscript. If your letter contains a postscript, begin it with **P.S.** and end it with your initials. Skip a line after the signature line to begin the postscript.

Format for a Friendly or Personal Letter

305, International House
University of Utah
Salt Lake City
June 29, 2009

My dear Mummy and Daddy

Many thanks for your letter which arrived this morning. Sorry, I have not been writing as regularly as I should.

The fact is I have started cooking my own food here. It is much cheaper than the Hostel food and sometimes even better. There is a kitchenette next to my room. Breakfast - porridge, eggs and coffee – can be prepared in about 10 minutes and there is always some bread and cheese and fruit to go with it. Lunch takes about the same time. And the most it takes to prepare a good dinner is less than an hour. And part of the time you can be watching TV in the next room. So it is no trouble at all. Moreover, I have teamed up with a friend of mine, so we share the work, which makes it much easier.

Do send some recipes – for frying fish, cutlets and so on. We can get real good minced meat here and all the spices and very fine rice. So we can make anything we want.

There are lots of Indians at the International House this year. The latest to come is one from Bangalore who is working for his Doctorate in Geophysics. During the Xmas-New Year break we were invited by several Indian families here. So we went out and ate a lot. And we called all the Indian families over. I cooked Kheema for forty people. And it was perfectly edible. You don't believe it? Well ...

How is everybody at home? Ask Tina to write to me unless she is too busy cutting up corpses in the Medical College.

Your Affectionate son
Krishna

My dear Margaret,

Here it is summertime, and the birds are singing and the flowers are blooming and the bees making honey, and we haven't been fishing yet. Well, there is only one more month till July, and then we will go, and no mistake. I thought you might write and tell me about the high water round Pittsburgh sometime ago, and whether it came up to where you live or not...

I would like very much to hear from you oftener; it has been more than a month now since you wrote. Write soon and tell me how you are, and when school will be out, for we want plenty of holidays in July, so we can have a good time. I am going to send you something nice the last day of this week. What do you guess it will be?

Lovingly,
Papa

(This is a letter written by story writer to his daughter Margaret.)

Personal Letter writing tips

Personal letters express your own ideas, so you generally have a far wider choice of content with them than you do with business letters. However, an effective personal letter must still be clearly organized and carefully thought out. The following tips should make your task easier.

- Even though personal letters are not as formal as business letters, they contain the same elements: heading, salutation, body, closing, and signature.
- Reread any recent letters you received from the person to whom you are writing. This will help you answer the person's questions and include items of interest to the reader.
- Use vivid sensory impressions. Also include figures of speech, such as similes and metaphors.
- Dialogue makes your writing more specific and interesting, too.
- Never assume that your reader knows everyone in your life. Identify all unfamiliar people and places you mention.
- Check your grammar and usage carefully. Even though your letter is informal, you want to get it right and prevent misunderstandings.
- Reread for errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and logic.
- Make your letter easy to read by typing or writing clearly.
- Try to end your letter on a positive note. Avoid lame endings like, 'Well, that's all I have to say' or 'It's late so I'll end this letter.'

4.2. Formal letters

In English there are a number of conventions that should be used when writing a formal or business letter.

Furthermore, you try to write as simply and as clearly as possible, and not to make the letter longer than necessary. Remember not to use informal language like contractions.

Addresses:

1) Your Address
The return address should be written in the top right-hand corner of the letter.

2) The Address of the person you are writing to
The inside address should be written on the left, starting below your address.

Date:
Different people put the date on different sides of the page. You can write this on the right or the left on the line after the address you are writing to. Write the month as a word.

Salutation or greeting:

1) Dear Sir or Madam,
If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to, use this. It is always advisable to try to find out a name.

2) Dear Mr Jenkins,
If you know the name, use the title (Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms, Dr, etc.) and the surname only. If you are writing to a woman and do not know if she uses Mrs or Miss, you can use Ms, which is for married and single women.

Ending a letter:

1) Yours faithfully
If you do not know the name of the person, end the letter this way.

2) Yours sincerely
If you know the name of the person, end the letter this way.

3) Your signature
Sign your name, then print it underneath the signature. If you think the person you are writing to might not know whether you are male of female, put you title in brackets after your name.

Content of a Formal Letter

First paragraph
First paragraph should be short and state the purpose of the letter- to make an enquiry, complain, request something, etc.

Paragraph or paragraphs in the middle
The paragraph or paragraphs in the middle of the letter should contain the relevant information behind the writing of the letter. Most letters in English are not very long, so keep the information to the essentials and concentrate on organising it in a clear and logical manner rather than expanding too much.

Last Paragraph
The last paragraph of a formal letter should state what action you expect the recipient to take or to refund, send you information, etc.

Abbreviations Used in Letter Writing
The following abbreviations are widely used in letters:

asap = as soon as possible

cc = carbon copy (when you send a copy of a letter to more than one person, you use this abbreviation to let them know)

enc. = enclosure (when you include other papers with your letter)

pp = per procurationem (A Latin phrase meaning that you are signing the letter on somebody else's behalf; if they are not there to sign it themselves, etc)

ps = postscript (when you want to add something after you've finished and signed it)

pto ***(informal)*** = please turn over (to make sure that the other person knows the letter continues on the other side of the page)

RSVP = please reply

Layout of a Formal Letter

The example letter below shows you a general layout for a formal letter. Pass your mouse over the different areas of it to find out more information.

4. 3. Business Letters

Business letters are formal paper communications between, to or from businesses and usually sent through the Post Office or sometimes by courier. Business letters are sometimes called "snail-mail" (in contrast to email which is faster). It includes:

- letter
- memo
- fax
- email

Who writes Business Letters?

Most people who have an occupation have to write business letters. Some write many letters each day and others only write a few letters over the course of a career. Business people also read letters on a daily basis. Letters are written *from* a person/group, known as the sender *to* a person/group, known in business as the recipient:

business «» business
business «» consumer
job applicant «» company
citizen «» government official
employer «» employee
staff member «» staff member

A business letter is more formal than a personal letter. It should have a margin of at least one inch on all four edges. It is always written on 8□"x11" (or metric equivalent) unlined stationery. There are **six** parts to a business letter.

1. The Heading. This contains the return address (usually two or three lines) with the date on the last line.
Sometimes it may be necessary to include a line after the address and before the date for a phone number, fax number, E-mail address, or something similar.

Often a line is skipped between the address and date. That should always be done if the heading is next to the left margin.
It is not necessary to type the return address if you are using stationery with the return address already imprinted. Always include the date.

2. The Inside Address. This is the address you are sending your letter to. Make it as complete as possible. Include titles and names if you know them.

This is always on the left margin. If an 8□" x 11" paper is folded in thirds to fit in a standard 9" business envelope, the inside address can appear through the window in the envelope.

An inside address also helps the recipient route the letter properly and can help should the envelope be damaged and the address become unreadable.

Skip a line after the heading before the inside address. Skip another line after the inside address before the greeting.

3. The Greeting. Also called the salutation, the greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word "Dear" and always includes the person's last name.

It normally has a title. Use a first name only if the title is unclear--for example, you are writing to someone named "Leslie," but do not know whether the person is male or female.

The greeting in a business letter always ends in a colon. (You know you are in trouble if you get a letter from a boyfriend or girlfriend and the greeting ends in a colon--it is not going to be friendly.)

4. The Body. The body is written as text. A business letter is never hand written. Depending on the letter style you choose,

paragraphs may be indented. Regardless of format, skip a line between paragraphs.

Skip a line between the greeting and the body. Skip a line between the body and the close.

5. The Complimentary Close. This short, polite closing ends with a comma. It is either at the left margin or its left edge is in the center, depending on the Business Letter Style that you use.

It begins at the same column the heading does.

The block style is becoming more widely used because there is no indenting to bother with in the whole letter.

6. The Signature Line. Skip two lines (unless you have unusually wide or narrow lines) and type out the name to be signed. This customarily includes a middle initial, but does not have to. Women may indicate how they wish to be addressed by placing **Miss, Mrs., Ms.** or similar title in parentheses before their name. The signature line may include a second line for a title, if appropriate. The term "By direction" in the second line means that a superior is authorizing the signer. The signature should start directly above the first letter of the signature line in the space between the close and the signature line. Use blue or black ink.

Business letters should not contain postscripts. Some organizations and companies may have formats that vary slightly.

Why write Business Letters?

There are many reasons why you may need to write business letters or other correspondence:

- to persuade
- to inform
- to request
- to express thanks
- to remind
- to recommend
- to apologize
- to congratulate
- to reject a proposal or offer
- to introduce a person or policy
- to invite or welcome
- to follow up
- to formalize decisions

Covering letter

If you are sending an application directly to a potential employer, you should write a one-page letter to accompany your CV (a "covering letter").

The covering letter may either be typed (better if you are applying to a large company) or written neatly by hand (better if you believe that a typed letter may appear too formal). There is an example covering letter shown below.

If you know the name of the person who is dealing with the job applications, you can start the letter with "Dear Mr Smith" or "Dear Ms Smith" (you can use "Dear Mrs Smith" if you know she is married; if the person has a title you should use it, for example "Dear Professor Smith"), and in this case you should end the letter with "Yours sincerely". If you do not know the name of the person, you should start the letter with "Dear Sir" or "Dear Sir/Madam", and end the letter with "Yours faithfully".

If you are applying for a particular job vacancy, write which job you are applying for (including a reference number if there is one) and where you saw the advertisement. Briefly describe why you think you are suitable for the job; mention any relevant work experience or qualifications which you have.

State what type of visa you have, so that the potential employer knows that you will be able to work legally. You may want to mention the level of your English ability.

Explain in your letter how you can be contacted. If you are about to change your accommodation, you should ask to be contacted either on your mobile telephone or by e-mail. If you give the telephone number of your host family, you should ask them for their permission first, and you should check if they have an answering machine.

Outline: A Covering Letter
A covering letter is the one that accompanies your CV when you are applying for a job. Here is a fairly conventional plan for the layout of the paragraphs.
Opening Paragraph
Briefly identify yourself and the position you are applying for. Add how you found out about the vacancy.
Paragraph 2
Give the reasons why you are interested in working for the company and why you wish to be considered for that particular post. State your relevant qualifications and experience, as well as your personal qualities that make you a suitable candidate.
Paragraph 3
Inform them that you have enclosed your current CV and add any further information that you think could help your case.
Closing Paragraph
Give your availability for interview, thank them for their consideration, restate your interest and close the letter.

Covering Letter for Resume or CV

26 rue Washington
75008 PARIS
France
tel: +33 1 77 77 77 77
email: rachelking@eflnet.fr

Date

The Principal
Inter Languages
77 Germain
75006 PARIS

Dear Madam

Director of Studies

I am interested in working as Director of Studies for your organisation. I am an EFL language instructor with nearly 10 years' experience to offer you. I enclose my resume as a first step in exploring the possibilities of employment with Interplay Languages.

My most recent experience was implementing English Through Drama workshops for use with corporate clients. I was responsible for the overall pedagogical content, including the student coursebook. In addition, I developed the first draft of the teacher's handbook.

As Director of Studies with your organisation, I would bring a focus on quality and effectiveness to your syllabus design. Furthermore, I work well with others, and I am experienced in course planning.

I would appreciate your keeping this enquiry confidential. I will call you in a few days to arrange an interview at a time convenient to you. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully

Rachel King

Rachel King

Outline: A Letter of Enquiry

A letter of enquiry is when you are approaching a company speculatively, that is you are making an approach without their having advertised or announced a vacancy.

Opening Paragraph
Introduce yourself briefly and give your reason for writing. Let them know of the kind of position you are seeking, why you are interested and how you heard about them.

Paragraph 2
Show why their company in particular interests you, mention your qualifications and experience along with any further details that might make them interested in seeing you.

Paragraph 3
Refer to your enclosed CV and draw their attention to any particularly important points you would like them to focus on in it.

Closing Paragraph
Thank them, explain your availability for interview and restate your enthusiasm for their company and desire to be considered for posts that might as yet be unavailable.

Business Letter Formats

There are certain standards for formatting a business letter, though some variations are acceptable (for example between European and North American business letters). Here are some basic guidelines:

- Use A4 (European) or 8.5 x 11 inch (North American) paper or letterhead
- Use 2.5 cm or 1 inch margins on all four sides

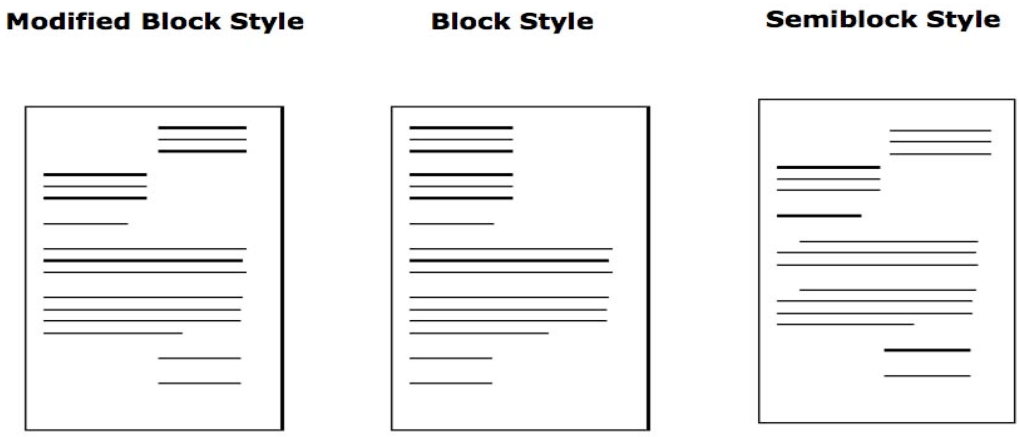
- Use a simple font such as Times New Roman or Arial
- Use 10 to 12 point font
- Use a comma after the salutation (Dear Mr Bond,)
- Lay out the letter so that it fits the paper appropriately
- Single space within paragraphs
- Double space between paragraphs
- Double space between last sentence and closing (Sincerely, Best wishes)
- Leave three to five spaces for a handwritten signature
- cc: (meaning "copies to") comes after the typed name (if necessary)
- enc: (meaning "enclosure") comes next (if necessary)
- Fold in three (horizontally) before placing in the envelope
- Use right ragged formatting (not justified on right side)

Business Letter Styles

There are some specific formats for business letters:

- Modified block format
- Block format
- Semiblock format

Business Letter Styles



Block format is the most common format used in business today. With this format, nothing is centred. The sender's address, the recipient's address, the date and all new paragraphs begin at the left margin.

Outline a Business Letter

The Heading

The heading of a business letter should contain the return address (usually two or three lines) followed by a line with the date. The heading is indented to the middle of the page in the modified block and semiblock styles. It begins at the left margin in the block style. If the stationery is

imprinted with the return address, then the return address may be omitted.

Sometimes a line after the address and before the date may include a phone number, a fax number, an E-mail address, or the like. Particularly if the address uses three or more lines, it is good to skip a line before the date. When using the block style, always skip a line before the date. Always include the date.

Example:

ADDRESS		
Mr. N. J. Lancaster	N. J.= initials of given names.	Mr. and Ms. mostly.
International Publishing	Ltd.= Limited liability corporation.	Mrs./Miss sometimes used
Ltd.	Kingsbury House = building name.	in North and by older
Kingsbury House	12 = building number.	women.
12 Kingsbury Road	Kingsbury Road = name of street/road	
EDGEWARE	EDGEWARE = city (capitalized)	Given names -called
Middlesex HA8 9XG	Middlesex = county (not capitalized)	Christian names- used in
	HA8 9XG = postcode (after 6 spaces -or on	business after some time -
	separate line)	Wait to be invited.

The Body

The first line of a new paragraph is indented in the semiblock style. The block and modified block style have all lines of the body to the left margin.

Regardless of style, skip a line between paragraphs.

Skip a line between the greeting and the body. Skip a line between the body and the close.

The Complimentary Close and Signature Line

The left edge of the close and signature line in the semiblock and modified block begin in the centre, at the same column as the heading.

The close and signature of the block letter begins at the left margin.

The complimentary close begins with a capital letter and ends with a comma.

Skip from one to three spaces (two on a typewriter), and type in the signature line, the printed name of the person signing the letter.

Sign the name in the space between the close and the signature line, starting at the left edge of the signature line.

Women may indicate how they wish to be addressed by placing **Miss, Mrs., Ms.** or similar title in parentheses before their name.

The signature line may include a second line for a title, if appropriate.

The signature should start directly above the first letter of the signature line in the space between the close and the signature line. Use blue or black ink.

Example:

Sincerely,
(Signature goes here)
(Mrs.) Elisabeth Jackson
Director of Acquisitions

Formatting Business Memos

Memos are short internal business letters, sent to other staff within the same company. A memo (or memorandum) may also be posted somewhere inside a company for all to see. Memos are becoming less common as electronic mail becomes more common. In contrast to letters, memos do not usually contain salutations or closings, and may be typed or hand-written. The text portion of the memo is generally in block format. Memos should include "From", "To", "Date", "Subject" and the message itself, like this:

Examples of internal memos

[Company logo]

MEMORANDUM

From: [name or initials]

To: [name or initials]

Date:

Subject: [short description]

Message starts here...

- often
- with
- bullet
- points

Internal Memo

CHOCOLATE HEAVEN EMPORIUM

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Staff
FROM: Management T.C.
DATE: November 9th, 20--
SUBJECT: STAFF CHRISTMAS PARTY

It's that time of year again. As you all know, Christmas is our busiest season of the year. Every year it is a struggle for management and supervisors to find the time and energy to organize a staff Christmas party. This year, we have decided to postpone the Christmas party until after our busy season.

Party Details

- Date: Second or third Saturday in January (T.B.A)
- Theme: Beach
- Food: Caribbean
- Special events: Karaoke and belly dancing

We apologize that the celebration will have to wait until the new year, but we guarantee that it will be worth the wait. Anyone interested in volunteering to help out with the event is encouraged to call Lucy, our events coordinator. Lucy's cell phone number is 222-3098. Please contact Lucy outside of business hours regarding this matter.

Thank you.

T.C.

Formatting Business Email

An email can be anything from an informal one-liner to a formal letter. Before you write, consider the purpose of your message. Keep your email short and to the point - it is best to limit yourself to five or six bullet points or a couple of paragraphs. Try to have only one topic per email.

Subject line

Your mail should include a subject line. This is what people see when they browse through their inbox and it is often the only clue people will get as to what the email is about. Make sure the subject line is meaningful and descriptive - don't just put Hello. Messages without subject lines are also more likely to be identified and tagged as SPAM or deleted before being read by the recipient. If you are replying to a message but are changing the subject of the conversation, change the subject too - or better still, start a new message altogether.

Don't use the words URGENT or IMPORTANT in the subject line of an email – your recipient may have many such emails to deal with. If your message really is urgent or important email is not the correct communication method to be using in the first place; the telephone is probably better.

Formats, grammar and spelling

Use only plain text in your email. Note that people use different email programs (Outlook) and platforms (Apple Macs, PCs, or Linux/Unix computers) to access their mail. Messages do not necessarily translate well between them if you are not using plain text. Remember that what you create in your compose window is not necessarily what the recipient sees - they may not have colour or font-style formatting in their

email program, for example. If you must compose an email in RTF or HTML, provide a plain-text alternative.

Use correct grammar and spelling. Poorly-worded and misspelt messages are hard to read and potentially confusing. Just because email is a fast mode of communication does not mean that it should be slipshod.

Attachments

Don't attach files unnecessarily. Attachments take longer to download than plain text emails and can be a source of viruses. Instead of sending an attachment, consider putting the text you wish to send in the body of your email or send a URL (web address) or some other reference instead. If you really do need to send an attachment, make sure that the recipient of your email can open the attachment you send. It is best not to use proprietary formats such as MS Word, or PowerPoint. Never send attachments to email lists or to large groups of people. The sheer volume entailed in many copies of a large attachment can overwhelm mail systems.

Signatures

A signature is a short piece of text added to the foot your emails. It usually contains contact details about yourself. Keep your signature short (4 to 6 lines) and to the point. Separate it from the body of your email using two dashes and a space (i.e. --). The signature should be plain text only, not RTF, not HTML and certainly no graphics or images. It should include your name, your position and possibly an address and phone number. Some people add famous or humorous quotes to their signatures. This can be acceptable and add character if done properly. Choose quotes on a neutral topic. It is probably best to avoid religious or political statements or anything people may take offence at, especially in your formal signature.

Addresses and personal names

A Personal name is an arbitrary string that many mail programs will allow you to define, which is attached to your e-mail address as a textual comment. Always provide a personal name if your mail system allows it - a personal name attached to your address identifies you better than your email address can on its own. Use a sensible personal name: "Guess who" or other such phrases are annoying as personal names and hinder the recipient's quick identification of you and your message.

> Example
> The address '344188@yahoo.com' conveys less information than if it were written as '344188@yahoo.com (John Mathews)'

Formatting Business Email

When using email in business, most of the guidelines for standard formatting in business letters apply. Here are a few differences:

- Choose a subject line that is simple and straightforward. Refrain from using key words that might cause an email to go into another person's trash box.
- Repeat the subject line in the body of the email, beneath the salutation (as with a letter).
- Use the "cc" address line to copy more than one person with your correspondence.
- You can request a receipt for important letters. The system will automatically let you know when someone has opened your email.
- Instead of a signature, include your typed name, and below it include your email address, business name and address, phone and fax number, and website if appropriate.
- Remember that people often print out emails, so your own email address and the subject line would be lost if you had not included them in the body of the email.
- Internal electronic mail may be formatted more like a memo than a formal letter.

Example of an e-mail:

[Your Name]
[Street • City • State • Zip Code]
[Phone # • Fax phone # • Messages phone # • Email]

[Date today]
Re: [To what this letter refers]

[CERTIFIED MAIL]
[PERSONAL]

[Recipient's Name]
[Company Name]
[Address]
[Address]

Attention [Recipient's Name]

Dear [Recipient's name]:

[SUBJECT]

Sincerely,

[Sign here]

[Your name, title]

[Identification Initials]
Enclosures: [Number]

cc: [Name for Copy]
[Name for Copy]

Replies
Include enough of the original message in your replies as it will help the recipient to place your reply in context. Quote back only the smallest amount you need to make your context clear. Use some kind of visual indication to distinguish between text quoted from the original message and your new text - this makes the reply much easier to follow. Pay careful attention to where your reply is going to end up: it can be embarrassing for you if a personal message ends up on a mailing list, and it's generally annoying for the other list members.

Courtesy and politenss
Most people tend to respond to emails without time for reflection. Don't write in all CAPITALS as it is considered to be SHOUTING. Avoid sarcastic comments, as these can be taken out of context and be very hurtful.

Use emoticons or smilies sparingly. They are never totally appropriate or professional in email communication.

Don't expect an immediate answer. Just because you don't get an answer from someone in ten minutes does not mean that he or she is ignoring you, and is no cause for offence.

When using email in business, most of the guidelines for standard formatting in business letters apply. Here are a few differences:

- Choose a subject line that is simple and straightforward. Refrain from using key words that might cause an email to go into another person's trash box.

- Repeat the subject line in the body of the email, beneath the salutation (as with a letter).
- Use the "cc" address line to copy more than one person with your correspondence.
- You can request a receipt for important letters. The system will automatically let you know when someone has opened your email.
- Instead of a signature, include your typed name, and below it include your email address, business name and address, phone and fax number, and website if appropriate.
- Remember that people often print out emails, so your own email address and the subject line would be lost if you had not included them in the body of the email.
- Internal electronic mail may be formatted more like a memo than a formal letter.

5. Essays in Engllish

An essay can have many purposes, but the basic structure is the same no matter what. You may be writing an essay to argue for a particular point of view or to explain the steps necessary to complete a task.
Either way, your essay will have the same basic format.

If you follow a few simple steps, you will find that the essay almost writes itself. You will be responsible only for supplying ideas, which are the important part of the essay anyway.

These simple steps will guide you through the essay writing process:

- Decide on your topic.
- Prepare an outline or diagram of your ideas.
- Write your thesis statement.
- Write the body.
  - Write the main points.
  - Write the subpoints.
  - Elaborate on the subpoints.
- Write the introduction.
- Write the conclusion.
- Add the finishing touches.

About the topic

Topic Has Been Assigned

You may have no choice as to your topic. If this is the case, you still may not be ready to jump to the next step. Think about the type of paper you are expected to produce. Should it be a general overview, or a specific analysis of the topic? If it should be an overview, then you are probably ready to move to the next step. If it should be a specific analysis, make sure your topic is fairly specific. If it is too general, you must choose a narrower subtopic to discuss.

For example, the topic "Kenya" is a general one. If your objective is to write an overview, this topic is suitable. If your objective is to write a specific analysis, this topic is too general. You must narrow it to something like "Politics in Kenya" or "Kenya's Culture."
Once you have determined that your topic will be suitable, you can move on.

Topic Has Not Been Assigned

If you have not been assigned a topic, then the whole world lies before you. Sometimes that seems to make the task of starting even more intimidating. Actually, this means that you are free to choose a topic of interest to you, which will often make your essay a stronger one.

Define Your Purpose

The first thing you must do is thinking about the purpose of the essay you must write. Is your purpose to persuade people to believe as you do, to explain to people how to complete a particular task, to educate people about some person, place, thing or idea, or something else entirely? Whatever topic you choose must fit that purpose.

Brainstorm > Subjects of Interest

Once you have determined the purpose of your essay, write down some subjects that interest you. No matter what the purpose of your essay is, an endless number of topics will be suitable. If you have trouble thinking of subjects, start by looking around you.

Before you are ready to move on in the essay-writing process, look one more time at the topic you have selected. Think about the type of paper you are expected to produce. Should it be a general overview, or a specific analysis of the topic? If it should be an overview, then you are probably ready to move to the next step. If it should be a specific analysis, make sure your topic is fairly specific. If it is too general, you must choose a narrower subtopic to discuss.

> For example, the topic "KENYA" is a general one. If your objective is to write an overview, this topic is suitable. If your objective is to write a specific analysis, this topic is too general. You must narrow it to something like "Politics in Kenya" or "Kenya's Culture."

Once you have determined that your topic will be suitable, you can move on.

About structure

The purpose of an outline or diagram is to put your ideas about the topic on paper, in a moderately organized format. The structure you create here may still change before the essay is complete, so don't agonize over this.

Decide whether you prefer the cut-and-dried structure of an outline or a more flowing structure. If you start one or the other and decide it isn't working for you, you can always switch later.

Diagram

Begin a diagram. If you are trying to persuade, you want to write your best arguments. If you are trying to explain a process, you want to write the steps that should be followed. You will probably need to group these

into categories. If you have trouble, group the steps into categories. If you are trying to inform, you want to write the major categories into which your information can be divided. In each shape or on each line, write the facts or information that supports that main idea.

Outline

Begin your outline by writing your topic at the top of the page.

Next, write the main ideas that you have about your topic, or the main points that you want to make.

If you are trying to persuade, you want to write your best arguments.

If you are trying to explain a process, you want to write the steps that should be followed.

You will probably need to group these into categories.

Compose a Thesis Statement

The thesis statement tells the reader what the essay will be about, and what point you, the author, will be making. Your thesis statement will have two parts.

The first part states the topic.

In case of Kenya: Kenya's Culture
Building a Model Train Set
Public Transportation

The second part states the point of the essay, where you could simply list the three main ideas you will discuss. For instance, if the topic is Kenya:

- Has a long history, blends traditions from several other cultures, and provides a rich heritage.
- Requires an investment in time, patience, and materials. helps with traffic congestion, resource management, and the city budget.

Body Paragraphs

In the body of the essay, all the preparation up to this point comes to fruition. The topic you have chosen must now be explained, described, or argued.

Each main idea that you wrote down in your outline will become one of the body paragraphs. If you had three or four main ideas, you will have three or four body paragraphs.

Each body paragraph will have the same basic structure:

1. Start by writing down one of your main ideas, in sentence form.
If your main idea is "reduces freeway congestion," you might say this:

Public transportation reduces freeway congestion.

2. Next, write down each of your supporting points for that main idea, but leave four or five lines in between each point. In the space under each point, write down some elaboration for that point.
3. Elaboration can be further description or explanation or discussion.
4. If you wish, include a summary sentence for each paragraph. This is not generally needed, however, and such sentences have a tendency to sound stilted, so be cautious about using them.

Write the body.

Write the main points.
Write the subpoints.
Elaborate on the subpoints.

Write the Introduction and Conclusion

Your essay lacks only two paragraphs now: the introduction and the conclusion. These paragraphs will give the reader a point of entry to and a point of exit from your essay.

Introduction

The introduction should be designed to attract the reader's attention and give her an idea of the essay's focus. Begin with an attention grabber. It is up to you, but here are some ideas:

- Startling information - This information must be true and verifiable, and it doesn't need to be totally new to your readers. It could simply be a pertinent fact that explicitly illustrates the point you wish to make.

If you use a piece of startling information, follow it with a sentence or two of elaboration.

- Anecdote - An anecdote is a story that illustrates a point.

Be sure your anecdote is short, to the point, and relevant to your topic. This can be a very effective opener for your essay, but use it carefully.

- Dialogue

An appropriate dialogue does not have to identify the speakers, but the reader must understand the point you are trying to convey. Use only two or three exchanges between speakers to make your point.

- Summary Information

A few sentences explaining your topic in general terms can lead the reader gently to your thesis. Each sentence should become gradually more specific, until you reach your thesis.

Conclusion

The conclusion brings closure to the reader, summing up your points or providing a final perspective on your topic. All the conclusion needs is three or four strong sentences which do not need to follow any set formula. Simply review the main points (being careful not to restate them exactly) or briefly describe your feelings about the topic. Even an anecdote can end your essay in a useful way.

The introduction and conclusion complete the paragraphs of your essay.

6. Punctuation

Understanding the principles behind the common marks of punctuation should strengthen your understanding of grammar and help you to use the marks consistently in your own writing.

These rules, in fact, are conventions that have changed over the centuries. They vary across national boundaries (American punctuation, followed here, differs from British practice) and even from one writer to the next.

We will direct you to guidelines for correctly using the most common marks of punctuation: periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, apostrophes, and quotation marks.

Abbreviations with Names and Titles of People

Use the full name in standard writing unless the person uses an initial as part of his or her name. Initials may be used in lists and addresses if appropriate.

Correct: George Smith
Correct, only in list or address: G. Smith
Correct: Robert E. Lee (The initial is fine here because that is the name he went by.)

Social titles before a proper name are capitalized. All but Miss and Master are abbreviated and end with a period.

Social titles: Mr. Master Mrs. Miss Ms.
Mlle. Mme. M. Messrs. (Plural of Mr. or M.)
Mmes. (Plural of Mrs., Ms., Mme.)

Those social titles that are abbreviated are abbreviated only in front of names.

Correct: Mr. Smith is not at home.
Incorrect: You'd better listen, Mr. (*Mr.* is not in front of name; do not abbreviate.)
Correct: You'd better listen, Mister.

Using Periods

Periods end declarative sentences and requests or mild commands.

Declarative: His name is Joshua.
Request or Mild Command: Please be sure to tell her I am coming.

Periods are used to end most abbreviations except for acronyms and abbreviations which are pronounced.

If a sentence ends with an abbreviation, no additional period is needed. If the sentence requires a question mark or exclamation point, one may be added after the period.

Incorrect: Please make the check out to Roland N. Payne, D.D.S..
(Second period at end not needed)
Correct: Please make the check out to Roland N. Payne, D.D.S.
Correct: Do I make the check out to Roland N. Payne, D.D.S.?

A period is used after numbers and letters in outlines.

Outline:
I. Punctuation
A. Periods
1. End sentences
2. Abbreviations
3. Outlines

A period always comes before a closing quotation mark.
Incorrect: George said, "I don't get it".
Correct: George said, "I don't get it."

Question Marks

Question marks end all direct questions. This includes incomplete questions and statements intended as questions.
Direct Question: What is your name?
Incomplete Question: Really? When? No kidding?
Statement Intended as Question: Your name is Fred?

Sentences which describe a question but do not directly ask a question are called indirect questions. They do not take a question mark.
Incorrect: He asked if he could leave early?
(Describes but does not ask a question)
Correct: He asked if he could leave early.
Correct: He asked, "May I leave early?"
(In the last one, the question is directly quoted.)

Use a question mark in parentheses after a point of fact to show uncertainty about it. Use sparingly and only for items impossible to verify.
Example: His great-great-grandfather (Nelson Bridger?) supposedly fought in the Black Hawk War.
Example: Chaucer was born in 1343 (?).
(Note that a question mark used this way is not an end mark. A period is still needed.)

Question Marks or Exclamation Points in Quotations

If a question or exclamation is quoted directly, the quotation contains the question mark or exclamation point. If the question or exclamation is at the end of the quotation, the question mark or exclamation point comes before the closing quotation mark.

Incorrect: "Look at that"! he exclaimed. "Did you see that"?
Correct: "Look at that!" he exclaimed. "Did you see that?"
(Question mark or exclamation point comes before quotation mark.)
A question mark can be found outside the quotation mark **if** the sentence is asking about a quotation, but the quotation itself is not a question.

Incorrect: Did Mark Antony say, "Friends, Romans, countrymen?"
(A question is not being quoted. The speaker is asking about a quotation.)
Correct: Did Mark Antony say, "Friends, Romans, countrymen"?
In the rare case where the question is about a quotation ending in a question, the sentence ends with a single question mark before the quotation mark.

Incorrect: Who said, "*Et tu, Bruté?*"?
(Second question mark redundant)
Correct: Who said, "*Et tu, Bruté?*"

Other Punctuation Marks with Quotation Marks

Always place a comma or period before beginning or ending quotation marks.

Incorrect: "Ned", he requested", please take this to Mr. Green".
Correct: "Ned," he requested, "please take this to Mr. Green."
Always place a colon or semicolon after ending quotation marks. (This is relatively rare.)
Correct: George claimed, "I have twenty points"**;** Bill said he had only twelve.

Exclamation Points

Sometimes called the exclamation mark, the exclamation point is used at the end of a sentence or after an interjection to show strong emotion or emphasis.

Exclamatory sentence: The rain did not stop for four days!
Strong command: Be back at ten o'clock or else!
Interjection: Wow!

When an emphatic interjection or direct address begins a sentence, you may use an exclamation point or a comma, depending on how much you want to show the strong emotion.

Correct: No, I don't want to go there.

Correct, more emotion: No, I don't want to go there!

Correct, even more emphasis: No! I don't want to go there!

Beware of overusing exclamation points. Using them too frequently makes them less meaningful.

Use of an exclamation point inside parentheses is used by some to show irony. Usually, the ironic tone should be clear from the words, but sometimes this special punctuation is added for emphasis. Some authorities do not consider this construction necessary, and it is of very limited use in most Standard English writing.

OK, informal: That butcher (!) is a vegetarian.

(The punctuation is probably not necessary, but it was placed there to emphasize the irony.)

Commas

Commas are the most frequently used punctuation mark in English. Originally used to show a pause, they are used nowadays in a variety of situations to make writing clearer. To summarize all of commas are used:

- The three most common comma rules
- Commas in compound sentences
- Commas in a series
- Commas with paired adjectives
- Commas and introductory words
- Commas after introductory phrases
- Commas after introductory clauses
- Commas with interrupting expressions
- Commas with non-restrictive modifiers
- Commas with geographical names
- Commas with dates
- Commas with titles that follow names
- Commas in addresses
- Commas in letter writing
- Commas in numbers
- Commas with certain words omitted
- Commas with quotations
- Adding commas for clarity
- Commas with adjectives following nouns
- When not to use commas

The Three Most Common Comma Rules

While there are many specific uses for commas, nearly eighty-five percent of the commas used in written English are used in a mere three situations.

If you know the basic rule for these three cases, you can use commas in over four-fifths of the times you need to use commas.

1. Put a comma before a coordinating conjunction that separates two independent clauses.
2. Put a comma after introductory words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.
3. Use commas to set off elements that interrupt or add information in a sentence.

Commas in Compound Sentences

Use a comma to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence when they are separated by a conjunction. The comma goes after the first clause and before the coordinating conjunction that separates the clauses. Make sure they are independent clauses and not some other construction where commas are not required.

Correct: We washed the dog, and then we cleaned up the mess that he made.

(This contains two independent clauses with their own subject and verb: *We washed* and *we cleaned.* The third clause, *that he made,* is a subordinate clause, so the rule does not apply.

Incorrect: We washed the dog, and then cleaned up his mess.

(There is only one subject. This is a single clause, not two independent clauses. The subject *we* has a compound verb.)

Correct: We washed the dog and then cleaned up his mess.

Commas in a Series

Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses in a series. A conjunction goes between the last two items of the series. While some authorities say that the comma before the conjunction is optional, leaving it out may cause confusion, so it is better to include it.

- Words: Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses.
- Phrases: This morning I woke up, got dressed, brushed my teeth, and ate breakfast.
- Clauses: In fact, the bus was full of people who got dressed, who brushed their teeth, and who ate breakfast this morning.

Incorrect: The street was filled with angry protestors, shouting spectators and police. (Leaving out the last comma makes it look like the police were shouting, too.)
Correct: The street was filled with angry protestors, shouting spectators, and police.

Commas with Paired Adjectives

- **Coordinate Adjectives**

If two adjectives modify a noun in the same way, place a comma between the two adjectives. These are called coordinate adjectives.

There is a two-part test for coordinate adjectives:

(1) Can you replace the comma with the word and?
(2) Can you reverse the order of the adjectives and keep the same meaning?

If you can do both, then you have coordinate adjectives.

Correct: Did you read about Macomber's short, happy life?
Test for Correctness: Did you read about Macomber's short and happy life?
Did you read about Macomber's happy, short life?

All three sentences say the same thing, so the adjectives are coordinate adjectives and separated by commas in the original.

- **Cumulative Adjectives**

If the paired adjectives fail the two-part test, then no comma is used. This shows that they must remain in a certain order to make sense. These are called cumulative adjectives.

Incorrect: The former, overweight woman told us how she lost fifty-five pounds.
Test for Correctness: The former and overweight woman...
(Makes no sense)
The overweight, former woman... (A former woman? At best the meaning is changed.) Clearly, no comma is needed for these cumulative adjectives.
Correct: The former overweight woman told us how she lost fifty-five pounds.

A device to help remember this punctuation rule is to keep in mind a common expression like *Christmas tree* or *fire truck.* We say, "green Christmas tree," but not "Christmas green tree." We say, "red fire truck," but not "fire red truck." Such cumulative expressions take no comma.

In some cases, it may be possible to change the first adjective to an adverb if it still makes sense by modifying just the second adjective. This

will not work if the adjective must modify both the adjective and noun that follows it.

Correct: The formerly overweight woman told us how she lost fifty-five pounds. However, that would not work for a sentence like the following:

Correct: The former secret agent had to change her identity.
In a case like this last one, the first adjective is clearly modifying the whole phrase *secret agent.*

Commas and Introductory Words or Phrases

Commas are used to set off certain items that often begin a sentence and have no grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence. These items include certain common expressions, unemphatic interjections, and direct addresses.

Common Expression: But of course, we have mustard in the car.

Unemphatic Interjection: Yes, we have no bananas.

Direct Address: Robert, please hand the man some mustard.

All three of these items are set off by commas no matter where they appear in the sentence. If they are not used at the beginning, the sentence often sounds more awkward.

Correct: Please, Robert, hand the gentleman some mustard.

Correct: We have mustard in our car, of course.

Introductory adverbs are normally set off by a comma unless they are followed directly by the word they modify.

Correct: Clearly, one and one make two.

Incorrect: Clearly, mistaken was the witness.

(*Clearly* modifies *mistaken* which directly follows it because of a change in the word order.)

Correct: Clearly mistaken was the witness.

Commas After Introductory Phrases

- **Prepositional Phrases**

Use a comma to separate a group of prepositional phrases of more than four words when the phrases come at the beginning of a sentence. Do not use a comma between separate phrases unless they are in a series.

A comma may also set off a single prepositional phrase at the beginning to make the sentence clear. A comma is recommended after any introductory prepositional phrase of more than four words.

Correct: Under the kitchen table the dog cowered.

(Single short, clear phrase. No comma needed.)

Correct: Under the spreading chestnut tree, the village smithy stands.
(Comma optional, but helpful due to length of phrase)
Correct: Under the pile of clothes, we found his wallet.
(Two prepositional phrases, not in a series)
Incorrect: On the sand, of the beach, by the inlet, we relaxed in the sun.
(Do not separate the phrases since they are not in a series.)
Correct: On the sand of the beach by the inlet, we relaxed in the sun.
Correct: Over hill, over dale, we hit the dusty trail.
(The two phrases are in series here. We could say "Over hill and over dale.")

- **Introductory Participial and Infinitive Phrases**

Use a comma to separate introductory participial phrases and infinitive phrases used as modifiers.

Correct: Looking for help, the man fell on his knees to beg.
(Participial phrase)
Correct: To raise enough money in time, Mary had to issue stock in her business.
(The infinitive phrase is used as a modifier)
Incorrect: To ski, is exhilarating.
(The infinitive is used as a noun, not a modifier.)
Correct: To ski is exhilarating.

Commas After Introductory Clauses

Place a comma after an introductory adverb clause. An adverb clause shows time, place, degree, extent, cause, or condition. It is a subordinate clause which begins with a subordinating conjunction.

Correct: Before the curtain fell, the actors bowed.
Correct: If the next two nights are sellouts, the play will be extended.
Note that if a sentence ends with an adverb clause, no comma is used. The subordinating conjunction is enough of a separation.
Incorrect: The play's run will be extended, if the next two nights are sellouts.
(No comma needed with adverb clause at end of sentence.)
Correct: The play's run will be extended if the next two nights are sellouts.

Commas with Interrupting and Parenthetical Expressions

In addition to the items covered in Commas with Introductory Words, conjunctive adverbs are also set off by commas.

Conjunctive Adverbs are adverbs which join sentence parts. The following words are the most common conjunctive adverbs:

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS
Also, besides, furthermore, however, indeed, instead, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, therefore, thus

Correct: John headed this way; however, he did not see me.

Correct: John headed this way; he did not see me, however.

Some adverbs which are used conjunctively may at times be used as a simple adverb. They are only set off by commas when used conjunctively or when some other comma rule applies.

Correct: John saw Kate; also, he saw Jean.

(*Also* here is joining the sentence parts.)

Incorrect: John saw Kate; he, also, saw Jean.

(*Also* here is simply modifying *saw.*)

Correct: John saw Kate; he also saw Jean.

Commas also set off **contrasting expressions** beginning with **not.**

Correct: I wanted this one, not that one.

Correct: We went to New Hampshire, not New Jersey, for our vacation.

Commas with Nonrestrictive Modifiers

A modifying word, phrase, or clause following a noun is set off by commas if it presents information which is not essential to identify the noun or the meaning of the sentence.

This is called a nonrestrictive modifier, i.e., it does not restrict the meaning of the noun or sentence.

Example: Any student not sitting down will get detention.

(This takes no comma because the phrase not sitting down is necessary to identify the noun. Remove it, and you get something very different: "Any student will get a detention.")

Example: Marcia Gomes, who was not sitting down, just got a detention.

(Here the person is named specifically. We know whom the sentence is about. The clause who was not sitting down does add information, but it is not necessary to identify the noun it modifies. Drop the clause and we still know who got the punishment: "Marcia Gomes just got a detention.")

Sometimes, the punctuation may depend on the situation. For example, if I have just one sister, or the reader already knows whom I am talking about, this sentence is correct:

My sister, Martha, is a nurse.

However, if I have more than one sister and it is not otherwise clear whom I am talking about, her name is essential to identify the sister.

My sister Martha is a nurse.

Or perhaps to make it clearer:

My sister Martha is a nurse; my sister Marianne is a teacher.

Commas with Geographical Names

When a geographical name or location has two or more parts to it, use a comma after each different type of part. A second comma follows the last item, unless it comes at the end of the sentence.

Incorrect: I meant Pittsburg Kansas instead of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.
(Commas needed to separate city and state)

Incorrect: I meant Pittsburg, Kansas instead of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
(Comma needed after last item, *Kansas*)

Correct: I meant Pittsburg, Kansas, instead of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

If the parts are joined by a preposition, no comma is needed.

Incorrect: I meant Pittsburg, in Kansas, instead of Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania.

Correct: I meant Pittsburg in Kansas instead of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania.

Commas with Dates

When a date is made up of two or more parts, use a comma to separate the parts when the parts both are words or both are numbers. A second comma follows the last item unless it is at the end of a list or sentence.

Incorrect: We will meet Friday July 15.
(Word *Friday* followed by another word, *July*--comma needed)

Correct: We will meet Friday, July 15.

Incorrect: October 31, 1517 is one of the most significant dates in history.
(The comma between the two numbers is OK, but a second comma is needed after the last item, *1517*.)

Correct: October 31, 1517, is one of the most significant dates in history.

Incorrect: October, 1517, was a major month in history.
(No commas needed because word *October* is followed by a number, *1517*.)

Correct: October 1517 was a major month in history.

If the parts of the date are connected by a preposition, no comma is needed.

Incorrect: On a Sunday, in December 1941, the U.S. found itself in World War II.
(No comma needed since the preposition *in* is there.)

Correct: On a Sunday in December 1941, the U.S. found itself in World War II.

Commas with Titles that Follow Names

Each title that follows a name is set off by commas.

Incorrect: Kenneth Griffey Jr. could have broken Maris' record.

Correct: Kenneth Griffey, Jr., could have broken Maris' record.

Correct, if pompous: The book was written by John Kenneth Galbraith, A.B., M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., Litt.D.
(Note that each title is set off by commas.)

Numerical titles following a name are not set off by commas.

Incorrect: Aloysius Otto Culp, III, is better known as "Buzz."

Correct: Aloysius Otto Culp III is better known as "Buzz."

Commas in Addresses

Use a comma to separate each part of an address that has two or more parts. This follows the same pattern as geographical names. Commas are not needed if prepositions join the address parts.

Incorrect: Write me in care of Post Office Box 203 Shelton Connecticut 06484.

(Commas needed)

Correct: Write me in care of Post Office Box 203, Shelton, Connecticut 06484.

(Comma after state or province and before postal code is optional.)

If the address is on an envelope or is otherwise written out line by line, no comma is needed when a new line begins.

Incorrect:

P.O. Box 203,

Shelton, Conn. 06484

(Comma after first line not necessary)

Correct:

P.O. Box 203

Shelton, Conn. 06484

Commas in Letter Writing

Use commas after the salutation (also called the greeting) in a personal letter and after the complimentary closing in all letters.

Salutation:

Dear Fred,

My dearest Emmeline,

Closing:

Sincerely,

Truly yours,

Commas in Numbers

In numbers of more than three digits, use a comma after every third digit from right to left.

Incorrect: The area of North America is approximately 9435000 square miles.

Correct: The area of North America is approximately 9,435,000 square miles.

(This is much easier to read.)

Numbers which normally do not take commas are ZIP codes, phone numbers, page numbers, serial numbers, house numbers, and dates of years.

Many European countries use a comma in place of the decimal point and use periods or blank spaces to separate every third digit.

United States: 2,367.48 euro

France: 2.367,48 euro or 2 367,48 euro

Commas with Certain Words Omitted

Words intentionally left out of clauses may be shown by a comma. A comma is used when the missing words are clearly understood.

Incorrect: George liked the color green; John red.

(Confusing)

Correct: George liked the color green; John, red.

(Now missing words are understood.)

Commas with Quotations

Commas are used to set off the "he said/she said" clause. The comma always goes before the quotation marks.

Incorrect: Henrietta asked "Do you want to go with me?"

(Comma must set off "she said" clause.)

Incorrect: Henrietta asked",Do you want to go with me?"

(Comma must go before quotation mark.)

Correct: Henrietta asked,"Do you want to go with me?"

Incorrect: "I will go with you",Jane replied.

(Comma must go before quotation mark.)

Correct: "I will go with you,"Jane replied.

Correct: "Anyway," she said, "I have to go."

(Note the pattern when the clause is in the middle.)

A comma is not used to set off a "he said/she said" clause if the part of the quotation preceding the clause ends with a question mark or exclamation point.

Incorrect: "Why did you do that?," he asked.

(Comma not necessary)

Correct: "Why did you do that?" he asked.

Correct: "Hey!" he screamed. "Come back here!"

(Note that the question mark or exclamation point goes with the quotation, not with the "he said/she said" clause.)

Adding Commas for Clarity

Sometimes it is necessary to add a comma to make a sentence clear.

Unclear: In the kitchen cupboards were empty.

(Make it clear that the phrase is "in the kitchen," not "in the kitchen cupboards.")

Clear: In the kitchen, cupboards were empty.

Unclear: The room was full of crying babies and mothers.

(Were the mothers crying, too?)

Clear: The room was full of crying babies, and mothers.

Clear: The room was full of mothers and crying babies.

Commas with Adjectives Following Nouns

Sometimes for emphasis adjectives or paired adjectives follow the noun they modify. The adjective or adjective pair is then set off by commas.

Correct: The car, bright red, stood out in the parking lot.

The adjective pair, if coordinate adjectives, must use the word and to separate the two adjectives.

Correct: The dessert, sweet and rich, was delightful.

When *Not* to Use Commas

- **With Compound Verbs**

Do not use a comma to separate the paired parts in paired compound subjects or compound verbs.

Incorrect: She lets me watch her mom, and pop fight.

(Compound subject no need for comma with the word *and* already there.)

Correct: She lets me watch her mom and pop fight.

Incorrect: They would argue over money, and scream about his late nights.

(Compound verb no need for comma to separate the words *money* and *scream*.)

Correct: They would argue over money and scream about his late nights.

- **With Subordinate Clauses**

Commas do not set off subordinate clauses unless some specific comma rule applies, namely they are clauses in a series, or the clauses are functioning as appositives, non restrictive modifiers, or introductory adverb clauses.

Incorrect: He told me that I had better come, so that they would avoid serious trouble.

(Not a series. Not an appositive, non restrictive modifier or introductory adverb clause.)

Correct: He told me that I had better come so that they would avoid serious trouble.

- **With Nouns and Modifying Adjectives**

Do not use commas to separate a noun and its modifying adjectives when the adjectives come before the noun.

Incorrect: The bright red, car was a Corvette.

Correct: The bright red car was a Corvette.

Semicolons and Colons

Semicolons and colons were originally used to designate pauses shorter than a period and longer than a comma. Now they are used to show certain grammatical relationships with the colon the more emphatic of the two.

- **Semicolons with Clauses**

Semicolons are used to separate independent clauses in three different cases.

1. When there are no conjunctions separating the clauses.

Incorrect: I like you, John likes you, too.

(Semicolon needed)

Correct: I like you; John likes you, too.

2. When the clauses are separated by a conjunctive adverb or other parenthetical expression set off by commas.

Correct: I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live.--Galatians 2:20.

(*Nevertheless* is a conjunctive adverb.)

Correct: Hector was a Trojan; Achilles, on the other hand, was an Achaean.

3. When the clauses themselves contain commas.

Incorrect: He wears shoes with kilties, a leather fringe, but I prefer penny loafers myself.

(Since clause already has comma, semicolon separating the clauses is needed to make sentence clear.)

Correct: He wears shoes with kilties, a leather fringe; but I prefer penny loafers myself.

- **Semicolons in a Series**

When the items in a **series** themselves contain commas, separate the items with semicolons.

Incorrect: We visited Erie, Pennsylvania, Buffalo, New York, and Toronto, Ontario.

(Confusing. Semicolons needed to make clear distinctions.)

Correct: We visited Erie, Pennsylvania; Buffalo, New York; and Toronto, Ontario.

- **Colons with Lists**

Use a colon before a list when the list is preceded by a complete independent clause.

Never use a colon to separate a preposition from its objects or a verb from its complements. Some form of the word follow usually indicates a colon before the list.

Correct: John has all the ingredients: minced clams, milk, potatoes, and onions.
(The list is preceded by a complete independent clause.)
Incorrect: For their anniversary they went to: Aruba St. Martin, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.
(The colon separates the preposition *to* from its objects.)
Correct: For their anniversary they went to Aruba St. Martin, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.
(No colon needed)
Incorrect: To make clam chowder you need: minced clams, milk, potatoes, and onions.
(The colon separates the verb *need* from its complements.)
Correct: To make clam chowder you need minced clams, milk, potatoes, and onions.
(No colon needed)
Either incorrect sentence above could also be corrected by adding a form of the verb follow.
Correct: For their anniversary they went to the following places: Aruba, St. Martin, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.
(Now the word *places* is the object of the preposition *to,* and the colon follows a complete independent clause.)
Correct: To make clam chowder you need the following: minced clams, milk, potatoes, and onions.
(Now *the following* is the object of the the verb, and the list follows a complete clause.)

- **Colons Before Quotations**

Colons introduce quotations that are formal or lengthy.

Correct: Dickens wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."
(Formal quotation)
Colons introduce quotations that do not begin with a "he said/she said" clause.
Correct: Alexandra took the microphone: "Your honor, I object."
(Clause preceding quotation does not have a verb which denotes speaking.)
In all cases, the colon precedes the quotation marks.

- **Colons Separating Independent Clauses**

Colons may be used to separate independent clauses that are not separated by a conjunction or any other connecting word or phrase.

Semicolons are normally used, but the colon adds emphasis, especially if the first clause leads into the second clause or has a parallel construction. The second clause begins with a capital letter.

Correct: Grapes are not squeezed: The pulp is pressed.

Some authorities do not capitalize the word following the colon when the subject or point of view does not change between the first and second clauses.

- **Colons with Formal Appositives**

Use a colon instead of a comma to introduce an appositive at the end of a sentence for emphasis.
Appositives may be words, phrases, or clauses. If it is an independent clause, that clause begins with a capital letter.

Correct: He was watching his favorite type of television show: a baseball game.
(A comma is fine, but a colon here provides emphasis and/or formality.)
Correct: He learned a valuable lesson: Never argue with a woman.
(The appositive here is an independent clause, so it is capitalized.)

- **Colons in Special Cases**

There are half a dozen special uses for the colon.

1. Numerical expressions of time.

Example: 5:31 p.m.
The colon goes between the hour and minute. If seconds are noted, a colon goes between the minute and second.
Example: He ran the marathon in 2:14:33.2.
(Two hours, fourteen minutes, and thirty-three point two seconds.)
Example: He ran the mile in 4:12.
(Four minutes and twelve seconds)

2. Periodical references in a bibliography or formal reference.
This may vary slightly depending on the form followed. Most frequently the reference is Volume: Issue Number or Volume: Page Number.

3. Bible references, Chapter: Verse.

Example: John 3:16
("The book of John, chapter 3, verse 16.")

4. Subtitles for books, periodicals, and articles are preceded by a colon.

Example: *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*

5. Salutations in business letters are followed by a colon.

Example:
Dear Sir:
Dear Ms. Hathaway:

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks normally come in pairs to set off a portion of text for a variety of purposes. Paired single quotation marks are sometimes used as well.

Quotations Marks in Direct Quotations

When a person or work is quoted directly and word for word, the quotation is placed in quotation marks.

An indirect quotation in which the substance but not exact wording is used does not take quotations marks.

Correct: Macbeth said, "All our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death."

(A direct quotation)

Incorrect: Macbeth said that, "Their past actions lead fools to death."

(Contains the substance, but not exact words. Quotation marks are not used.)

Correct: Macbeth said that their past actions lead fools to death.

Quotation Marks in Dialogue

Begin a new paragraph with every change of speaker.

Incorrect:

"Hello, Mary," Jeffrey stammered. "Hi, Jeffrey, how are you?" "Uh, fine. What have you been doing lately?"

Correct:

"Hello, Mary," Jeffrey stammered.

"Hi, Jeffrey, how are you?"

"Uh, fine. What have you been doing lately?"

For quotations longer than a single paragraph, put quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph but only at the end of the final quoted word. This is the only case in which an opening quotation mark may not have a matching closing quotation mark.

Example:

Carton continued: "I see that child who lay upon her bosom and who bore my name, a man winning his way up in that path of life which once was mine. I see him winning it so well, that my name is made illustrious there by the bright light of his. I see the blots I threw upon it faded away. I see him, foremost of thee just judges and honored men, bringing a boy of my name, with a forehead that I know and golden hair, to this place--then fair to look upon, with not a trace of this day's disfigurement--and I hear him tell the child my story, with a tender and faltering voice.

"It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

Because the quotation is longer than a paragraph, note that the first paragraph has no closing quotation marks. Quotation marks do open the next paragraph to show that the quotation continues.

Quotation Marks in Titles

Use quotation marks to set off the title of a short written work or parts of a longer work.

Short works include short stories, chapters from a book, one-act plays, short poems, essays, songs, and articles.

Parts of a longer work include episodes in a series, songs, parts of a longer music composition, or an item named as part of a collection.

Examples:

"The Highwayman" (poem)

"The Star-Spangled Banner" (song)

"The Dead" by James Joyce (short story)

"Dan Quayle Was Right" (article)

"The Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy" (part of longer work)

Underlining or Italicizing Titles

Titles of longer written works are underlined or italicized.

Longer written works include books, full-length plays, films, longer musical compositions, and periodicals.

Incorrect (speaking of the musical): I like Oklahoma.

(The state?)

Incorrect: I like "Oklahoma."

(The song?)

Correct: I like *Oklahoma.* OR

I like Oklahoma.

(The title of a longer work is italicized or underlined.)

Correct: I liked *Macbeth,* but not Macbeth.

(I liked the play Macbeth, but not the character of that name.)

Correct: *Time* magazine carried a review of *Blade Runner,* the film based on the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

(The periodical, film, and book title are all italicized or underlined. Note that the question mark is italicized also because it is part of the title.)

Titles of radio and television series as well as works of art are underlined or italicized.

Correct: Rodin's *The Thinker*

Correct: We used to watch reruns of *Gilligan's Island.*

Correct: My favorite *Star Trek* episode is "The Trouble with Tribbles."

Note the last one--the series is italicized; the episode is in quotation marks.

If an italicized or underlined name or title appears in the title of a work or some other writing which is otherwise italicized or underlined, the writer has a choice:

1. Normally the specific item reverts to standard type. This is always done in bibliographies and formal references.

Example: *A Commentary on* Piers Plowman
(Book title contains name of another book)

2. Or you may italicize or underline the title or otherwise italicized or underlined writing without regard to the further italicized words. This may be necessary to avoid confusion.

Example: *A Commentary on Piers Plowman* helped me understand that medieval work. (Using the style of #1 for this would be more likely to confuse the reader.)

Quotation Marks with Slang

Nonstandard or unusual slang terms are normally put in quotation marks. Keep in mind what is slang today may be widely used tomorrow. For example, when people first started getting arrested for using crack cocaine when it was a new product in the 1980s, news reports usually put the word "crack" in quotation marks. It was a slang term that many readers did not recognize. Now the term is widely understood and the quotation marks are no longer used.

Example: He got in trouble with the gang for "dropping dimes."
("Dropping dimes" is a slang term for *informing*.)

Definitions in Quotation Marks

Explicit definitions of words or terms are put in quotation marks.
Such definitions may or may not be direct quotations from a dictionary or similar source.

- Definitions followed by expressions as means, defines, or is defined as… are normally put in quotation marks. This highlights or emphasizes the definition.
- Definitions that follow the verb to be normally are not put in quotation marks since such definitions are seen as the same as a predicate nominative.
  Examples:

  A *kiltie* is a fringed leather flap found on some shoes.
  (The verb *to be* is used.)
  Kiltie means "a fringed leather flap found on some shoes."
  Kiltie is defined as "a fringed leather flap found on some shoes."

Single Quotation Marks

Use single quotation marks for a quotation or title using quotation marks inside another quotation or title which uses quotation marks.

Incorrect: She asked, "How many of you have read "The Lady of Shalott"?"
("The Lady of Shalott" is a poem. Same kind of quotation mark confuses reader.)
Correct: She asked, "How many of you have read 'The Lady of Shalott'?"
For titles or quotations within quotations within quotations (and so *ad infinitum*), alternate double and single quotation marks.

Example: Helen said,"She asked us,'How many of you have read "The Lady of Shalott"?' I had."

(The most this author has seen is five levels of quotations in *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *The Metamorphoses* by Ovid.)

In the British Isles the use of the single and double quotation marks is reversed from the way they are used in the United States. There the normal quotations and short titles are within single quotation marks. Double quotation marks are used for titles or quotations within quotation marks.

Underlining and Italicizing

Underlining words and *Italicizing* words in standard written English mean the same thing. Handwriting and typing normally show underlining. Typesetting for print usually uses italics. Most computers can go either way. Whichever way is chosen, be consistent and keep the same style throughout.

- **Grammar Slammer** normally uses *italics* because of the Web file convention of using underlining to show a jump spot or link.

- **Underlining Names**

Underline the specific name of **individual** air, sea, space, and land craft.

Examples:

Challenger (space)

Captain Bligh commanded the *Bounty* (sea)

He called the Chevy *Greased Lightning.* (land)

If an italicized or underlined name appears in the title of a work or some other writing which is otherwise italicized or underlined, the writer has a choice:

1. Normally the specific item reverts to standard type. This is always done in bibliographies and formal references.

Example: *Mutiny on the* Bounty by Nordhoff and Hall (Book title contains name of ship)

2. Or you may italicize or underline the title or otherwise italicized or underlined writing without regard to the further italicized words. This may be necessary to avoid confusion.

Example: The *Mutiny on the Bounty* film starred Marlon Brando. (Using the style of #1 for this would be more likely to confuse the reader.)

- **Underlining or Italicizing Foreign Words or Abbreviations**

Underline or italicize foreign words or abbreviations unless they are regularly used in English.

Because the English language is very flexible, it may sometimes be hard to tell whether some words are widely used. Check any word or phrase you have a question about in a dictionary.

Clearly, words like champagne or chimpanzee or an abbreviation like etc. are not native English words, but they are widely used so underlining words like them is not necessary.

Incorrect: That was a pro bono legal brief.

Correct: That was a *pro bono* legal brief.

(Legal term from Latin, used by lawyers but otherwise not common.)

- **Underlining or Italicizing Words for Emphasis**

Underline or italicize words which you want to emphasize. In printing and on many computers this may also be accomplished by bolder print. The emphasis either is because of special information the writer to wants to call to the reader's attention or because the word or words are meant be stressed in speech.

Examples: He insists that *two* men saw him.

(Information the writer wants to call attention to)

You said *what* to Mr. Blank?

(Word meant to be stressed in speech)

- **Underlining or Italicizing Items Which Name Themselves**

Underline or italicize numbers, symbols, letters, and words which name themselves (or which are used as the figure or word).

Incorrect: "Give me a C!" the cheerleader shouted.

(The letter is used as a letter, it names itself.)

Correct: "Give me a *C*!" the cheerleader shouted.

Incorrect: His 2's look like 7's.

(The numbers are being referred to as figures; they are not numbering anything.)

Correct: His *2*'s look like *7*'s.

Incorrect: How do you spell shepherd?

(The sentence is not about shepherds but about the word *shepherd*.)

Correct: How do you spell *shepherd*?

- **Titles with No Punctuation**

Do not underline, italicize, or place in quotation marks the name of the Bible, its books, divisions, or version, or other religious Scriptures and their divisions or versions.

Example: In I Corinthians the Bible says that the greatest eternal value is love. (The Bible and its book take no special punctuation.)

Example: The Talmud's tractate Sanhedrin discusses the laws and history of Jewish religious leadership. (The scriptural Talmud and its division, Sanhedrin, take no special punctuation.)

Do not underline, italicize, or place in quotation marks the title of any government document including charters, treaties, acts, statutes, or reports.

Examples: The Declaration of Independence

The North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 or the FWPCA

- **Scientific Nomenclature**

The Latin-derived scientific names are capitalized except for the specific and subspecific names. The generic, specific, and subspecific names are underlined or italicized.

The names of the following are capitalized: Kingdom, Phylum, Subphylum, Class, Subclass, Superorder, Order, Suborder, Superfamily, Family, Subfamily, Tribe, Genus, Subgenus.

The names of the following are not capitalized: superspecies, species, subspecies.

Names of superspecies, species, and subspecies always appear with the name of the genus (or at least the genus abbreviated) so that the full specific name begins with a capital letter.

The full specific name, genus plus species (and superspecies and subspecies, if used), is italicized or underlined.

> Examples: Birds are in the class Aves, subphylum Vertebrata, and phylum Chordata.
> The American Robin is in the family Turdidae, superfamily Muscicapidae, suborder Oscines, and order Passeriformes.
> The American Robin is *Turdus migratorius.*
> The Dark-Backed Robin, a northern-nesting subspecies, is known as *T. m. nigrideus.*
> (Note the use of capitalization and italics.)
> The genus or species name is abbreviated only when the name has already been used, and it is clear what the letters stand for. The last word in a species name is never abbreviated. So if we were to once again refer to the Robin species, we could write *Turdus migratorius* or *T. migratorius* but never simply *T.m.* unless it were followed by a subspecific name as was done above.

Dashes and Parentheses

Dashes and Parentheses are both used to show an interruption in thought or some kind of aside.

Dashes are more emphatic. Parentheses are normally paired.

Both should be used sparingly or they become a distraction. Parentheses also have a few special uses.

A dash is a long horizontal mark twice the length of a hyphen. On most typewriters and computers dashes are represented by typing two hy-

phens. Dashes are emphatic. They are nearly like emphatic parentheses. To be effective, dashes, like exclamation points, should not be overused. Dashes indicate an abrupt change of thought. Sometimes they set off a clause or phrase for emphasis or dramatic effect.

Examples:

Change of thought:

I loved the dinner last night--have you ever been to Chez Louis?

Set off statement for emphasis:

Punctuation marks can be confusing--commas, dashes, hyphens, colons!

Dashes with Non-restrictive Modifiers

Commas are normally used to set off non-restrictive modifiers. However, non-restrictive modifiers can be set off by dashes for emphasis or if the modifiers contain commas or other punctuation that could confuse the reader.

Incorrect: Some expensive films, *Heaven's Gate,* for example, have been big flops. (Relationships not clear)

Correct: Some expensive films--*Heaven's Gate,* for example--have been big flops.

Using Parentheses

Parentheses set off material not essential to the meaning of the text. They are used for asides and explanations when the material is not essential or if it is made up of more than one sentence.

Parentheses may contain a complete sentence or sentences.

Example: He had to go through the usual process to get his bus driver's license (police and FBI check, reference check, motor vehicle check, written exam, mechanical test, and driving test).

(This could be set off by a colon for more emphasis since it is a list or by a dash for strong emphasis. But since the sentence says "the usual process," there is no need to emphasize anything.)

Parentheses with Certain Numbers or Letters

Parentheses are used around numbers showing dates (usually dates of birth and/or death), inserted figures, or numbers or letters in an itemized series (such as a series of steps).

Date: Joshua Chamberlain (1829-1914) received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his role at Gettysburg.

Inserted figures: The Senate vote was very close (50-48).

Numbers in a series: To make New England Clam Chowder get the following items: (1) quahogs, (2) cream, (3) potatoes, and (4) onions.

Letters in a series: What was Hamlet's mother's name?

(a) Ophelia (b) Beatrice (c) Gertrude (d) Helena

A single closing parenthesis follows the number or letter in specific divisions of a formal outline.

Example:

I. Grammar

A. Punctuation

1. Parentheses

a. Parentheses with interrupting elements

b. Parentheses with certain numbers or letters

1) Dates

2) Inserted figures

3) Itemized series

a) Numbers

b) Letters

Some authorities enclose the numbers and letters in parentheses in an outline like this as with the letters and numbers in a series above.

Capitalizing and Punctuating Inside Parentheses

When a parenthetical phrase or sentence interrupts the middle of a sentence, do not capitalize the first letter inside the parentheses unless, of course, the word is a proper noun or proper adjective.

Example:

We saw Roseate Spoonbills (they have an exquisite pink color) on our trip to Texas.

The first letter in a parenthetical question or exclamation is always capitalized.

Incorrect: We saw Brown Pelicans (have you ever seen one?) along the shore there.

Correct: We saw Brown Pelicans (Have you ever seen one?) along the shore there.

A parenthetical sentence that goes between two sentences of text uses both an initial capital letter and an end mark (period, question mark, or exclamation point) inside the parentheses.

Incorrect: We took a trip to Texas. (it is a big state)! There we saw many Brown Pelicans.

Correct: We took a trip to Texas. (It is a big state!) There we saw many Brown Pelicans.

In a sentence containing a parenthetical expression, any punctuation belonging to the main sentence goes outside the parentheses.

Incorrect: It was a real heat wave (five days over 100°!)

Correct: It was a real heat wave (five days over 100°)!

Correct: We saw Jerry, Ed (Tom's brother), and Julius there last night.

Hyphens

A hyphen is a short horizontal line used within words. (The longer dash is used between words.) Hyphens are used in a variety of situations.

Numbers Written Out Using Hyphens

Use a hyphen between the tens and units number when writing out the numbers twenty-one to ninety-nine in words. Do not use hyphens for other numbers.

Incorrect: Two-hundred-fifty-six

Correct: Two hundred fifty-six

(Hyphen between tens and units only)

Use a hyphen between the numerator and denominator when a fraction is written out in words and the fraction is an adjective.

Incorrect: Two-thirds of the Senate overrode the veto.

(Here *two thirds* is a noun, not an adjective.)

Correct: Two thirds of the Senate overrode the veto.

Incorrect: A two thirds majority overrode the veto.

(Here *two thirds* is an adjective modifying *majority.*)

Correct: A two-thirds majority overrode the veto.

Hyphenated Prefixes and Suffixes

Use a hyphen after a prefix followed by a proper noun or proper adjective.

Examples: mid-June pre-Columbian Afro-American

Use a hyphen in words beginning with the prefixes all-, ex- (meaning "former"), and self- and in words ending with the suffix -elect.

Incorrect: selfpropelled ex-treme

(Prefix *self-* needs hyphen. The prefix in *extreme* does not mean "former.")

Correct: all-knowing ex-wife self-propelled mayor-elect ex-treme exacting

Hyphenated Compound Words

Hyphens are used internally in some compound words to separate the words forming the compound word.

Examples: merry-go-round editor-in-chief

When unsure of the hyphenation of such words, check a dictionary. Usage may vary. As some words are more widely used, the hyphen is dropped. For example, in the early 1800s the word blackbird was usually spelled black-bird. Now the hyphen has been dropped.

Hyphens connect the words of a compound modifier that comes before the word being modified. Hyphens are not used this way with com-

pound parts ending in -ly or made up of proper nouns or proper adjectives.

Incorrect: He is a well respected man.

Correct: He is a well-respected man.

(A compound modifier before the noun.)

Incorrect: That man is well-respected.

Correct: That man is well respected.

(The modifier follows the noun, no hyphen.)

Incorrect: That was a badly-punctuated sentence.

Correct: That was a badly punctuated sentence.

(Modifier ends in *-ly,* no hyphen.)

Incorrect: The South-American rain forest is home to hundreds of species of hummingbirds.

Correct: The South American rain forest is home to hundreds of species of hummingbirds.

(Modifier is proper, no hyphen.)

Some authorities recognize the use of a hyphenated compound adjective following the verb to be, especially if necessary for clarity.

Hyphens in Words for Clarity

Hyphens within a word can make some words clearer. They are frequently used with prefixes ending with the same vowel as the root begins with to show pronunciation or emphasize meaning. They are also frequently used to distinguish between words.

Examples:

co-op (instead of *coop,* also prefix ending with same vowel as root beginning)

Re-elect (prefix ending with same vowel as root beginning)

Re-form the clay pot (instead of *reform,* which has a different meaning)

Re-sign a contract (instead of *resign,* which could mean nearly the opposite.)

Sometimes words may be combined mistakenly. A hyphen can help the reader understand what is meant.

Incorrect: The guard captured five foot soldiers.

(Is it five-foot soldiers, or five foot-soldiers?)

Correct: The guard captured five foot-soldiers.

According to author Vince Emery, a message posted on the Internet almost started a "flame war" because it said, "I *resent* your message." It was supposed to say, " I *re-sent* your message."

Dividing Words at End of Line

Hyphens are used to divide words at the end of a line when the word cannot fit on the remainder of the line. It is best not to divide a word this way. If necessary for considerations of space or format, there are seven rules to follow.

1. Divide the word between syllables. This means, of course, that one-syllable words are never divided.

Incorrect:	Incorrect:	Correct:
sp-	su-	sup-
orts	pport	port

2. The hyphen goes at the end of the first line.

Incorrect:	Correct:
sup	sup-
-port	port

3. Prefixes and suffixes make natural divisions.

Incorrect:	Correct:
in-	inter-
ternational	national

(The prefix is *inter*.)

4. There should be at least two letters plus the hyphen on the first line and three letters on the second.

Incorrect:	Incorrect:	Correct:
e-	supposed-	sup-
lect	ly	posedly

5. Do not divide proper nouns or proper adjectives.

Incorrect:	Correct:
Wash- ington	Washington

6. Divide hyphenated word using the hyphen already in the word.

Incorrect:	Correct:
moth-	mother-
er-in-law	in-law

7. Do not divide a word at the end of a line if the parts of the word will be on two separate pages. This is hard for the reader to follow.

Apostrophes

The apostrophe is generally used with the letter S to indicate possession. It is also used in various ways to show letters have been left out of a word.

Apostrophes Showing Possession

An apostrophe is normally used with the letter s to show ownership or possession. With most singular nouns, simply add an apostrophe plus the letter s to do this. An apostrophe plus s is never added to make a noun plural--even a proper noun.

Incorrect: This is Joans jacket.

(Possessive form needs the apostrophe)

Correct: This is Joan's jacket.

Incorrect: He ate four hot dog's at the picnic.

(Not possessive; use no apostrophe to make a noun plural.)

Correct: He ate four hot dogs at the picnic.

Incorrect: We saw the Smith's at the picnic.

(Not possessive; use no apostrophe to make a name plural.)

Correct: We saw the Smiths at the picnic.

If the singular noun ends with an s, add apostrophe s if the extra syllable is pronounced. If the extra syllable is not pronounced (or if it otherwise looks confusing to add apostrophe's), simply add an apostrophe.

Examples: the dress's hem

(Added syllable is pronounced.)

Lloyd Bridges' son

(Added syllable is not pronounced.)

Some authorities always add an apostrophe only to any word ending with **s,** regardless of its pronunciation. This is acceptable. Whichever standard you follow, be consistent.

Example: the dress' hem

(Word ends in **s,** pronunciation does not matter.)

Plural Possessives

To make most nouns plural, add an -s or -es. The -es is added to words that end in an s or z sound. Do not use an apostrophe.

Examples: lands dresses taxes quizzes

Incorrect: Twenty dog's were in the pack.

Correct: Twenty dogs were in the pack.

To make a plural noun possessive, simply add an apostrophe to the word. If the plural does not end in an s, then add an apostrophe plus s.

Examples: The girls' dresses (The dresses belonging to the girls.)

The Wilsons' house (The Wilsons live in the house.)

The men's room (Plural does not end in s.)

Apostrophes with Possessives of More than One Owner

To show that more than one person share the same item together, make only the last owner in the series possessive.

Examples: Ken and Larry's ice cream (They share the same ice cream.)
John and Mary's pet cats (They share the same cats.)
To show that there are similar items which are owned individually by different owners, make each owner in the series possessive.
Example: John's and Mary's pet cats. (They each have their own pet cat or cats.)

Apostrophes with Italicized or Underlined Items

Letters, numbers, symbols, and words used as themselves are italicized or underlined. When these items are made plural, the plural is shown by adding apostrophe s to the underlined or italicized item. The apostrophe and s are not italicized or underlined. Some authorities make acronyms or abbreviations plural by adding apostrophe *s.* Not all authorities recognize this rule. Other authorities make a date that names itself plural by adding apostrophe *s.* Not all authorities recognize this rule. These three instances are the only times in English when adding an apostrophe plus *s* makes something plural. Since not all authorities recognize the last two instances, whether you choose to add an *s* or to add an apostrophe *s,* be consistent.

Examples:
Don't forget to dot your *i*'s. (Letter as a letter)
His *7*'s look like *2*'s. (Number as number)
His *&*'s look like *8*'s. (Symbol as symbol)
I find the *thee*'s and *thou*'s in older writing hard to follow. (Words as words)
Recognized by some authorities: He has IRA's in several different banks. (Plural of acronym or abbreviation)

Also:

The 1930's were called the Red Decade. (Plural of year naming itself)
Recognized more widely or traditionally: He has IRAs in several different banks. (Plural of acronym or abbreviation)
The 1930s were called the Red Decade. (Plural of year naming itself)

Apostrophes with Verb Contractions

Apostrophes generally show missing letters in contractions. In most formal writing such contractions should be avoided. The most common contractions involve verbs in five situations.

1. Verbs with not contracted, or shortened.

Examples:
aren't don't isn't wasn't can't weren't weren't wouldn't doesn't hasn't haven't couldn't

The word won't is a contraction of will not--in older dialects will was often spelled with an o. The word shan't for shall not is seldom used in the United States. The word ain't is considered nonstandard.

2. Pronouns with will.

Examples: I'll you'll he'll she'll they'll

Note that In conversation the word will is often slurred and may show up in dialogue as 'll after most nouns, e.g., "John'll come home soon."

3. Pronouns and nouns with the verb to be.

Examples: I'm you're who's (i.e., *who is*) he's she's it's we're they're

In conversation the word is is often contracted with nouns, e.g. "Martha's here."

Please note four confusing contractions:

who's it's you're they're

Remember, the apostrophe indicates that letters have been left out.

who's = who is or who has you're = you are it's = it is or it has

they're = they are

The possessive of who is whose.

Correct: Who's coming with me? (Contraction)

Correct: Whose book is this? (Possessive)

4. Pronouns with the verb to have.

Examples: I've he's you've we've they've

Note that the 's could stand for is or has.

Sometimes the word have is slurred, especially after verbs like would, could, and should. In dialogue this can be shown as 've, but never as of.

Incorrect: We would of like to have gone.

Correct: We would've liked to have gone.

(To show contraction in speaking)

Correct: We would have liked to have gone.

(In more formal writing)

5. Pronouns with would or had contracted.

Examples: I'd he'd she'd you'd we'd they'd

I'd better go. (*I had* better go.)

He'd want to go. (*He would* want to go.)

In everyday conversation the word would is often slurred and may be shown as 'd following a noun in dialogue, e.g. "John'd be upset if he found out."

Apostrophes with Other Contractions

When writing about **years,** insert an apostrophe where numbers are dropped.

Examples: The winter of '65 the '96 Olympics

In a few words and some names, o', d', l', and t' indicate abbreviated forms of the or of in various languages.

Examples: o'clock L'Enfant Plaza P.J. O'Rourke

Sometimes to show pronunciation in dialogue, the word is contracted to show missing letters. Avoid this in formal writing except in quotations, even when the contraction is a more accurate representation.

Examples: C'mon for "come on"

L'il Abner for "Little Abner"

fo'c's'le or fo'csle for "forecastle"

gun'le for "gunwale"

Even though forecastle sounds like "folks'll," and gunwale rhymes with "funnel," these words should not be contracted except in dialogue.

The Ellipsis

The ellipsis is three periods in a row. It signifies that words or figures are missing. Most frequently an ellipsis is used with quotations. It may come at the middle or end of a quotation. It may be used at the beginning of a quotation if the quotation begins mid-sentence and there is an appropriate lead-in. In mathematics an ellipsis shows that numbers have been left out. This is usually used in decimals, series, and matrices.

Quotation: "Sometimes I'm ancient. I'm afraid of children my own age. They kill each other. Did it always use to be that way? My uncle says no. Six of my friends have been shot in the last year alone. Ten of them died in car wrecks. I'm afraid of them and they don't like me because I'm afraid. My uncle says his grandfather remembered when children didn't kill each other. But that was a long time ago when they had things different. They believed in responsibility, my uncle says."

Quotation from

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451,* (New York: Ballantine, 1979) 32.

Ellipsis in middle: "I'm afraid of children my own age. They kill each other. Did it always use to be that way? My uncle says no...My uncle says his grandfather remembered when children didn't kill each other. But that was a long time ago when they had things different. They believed in responsibility, my uncle says."

Ellipsis at end: "My uncle says his grandfather remembered when children didn't kill each other. But that was a long time ago..."

Some authorities use four periods instead of three when the ellipsis is at the end or if more than a paragraph has been left out.

Ellipsis at beginning: Clarisse said her uncle's grandfather "...remembered when children did not kill each other."

Mathematical: 3.14159...

Brackets

Brackets, or crotchets, are always used in pairs to mark off material inserted into a quotation which is not part of the original quotation. The use of brackets should be limited, but may include short references, short definitions, a short piece of information which clarifies the quotation, or an editorial comment.

The Latin word sic, which means "thus" or "so," is often put into brackets to indicate a misspelling or some other misuse of language in the original quotation.

Brackets are also used in dictionaries, glossaries, and word lists to show word origins and etymologies.

Brackets may be used to show parenthetical information for material already inside parentheses.

Examples:

Editorial insertion:

Then Ceres asked: Tell me, heavenly bow,
If Venus or her son [Cupid], as thou dost know,
Do now attend the queen. (Clarifies the meaning)

Misspelling in original quotation:

"Mi dere Jo I hope u r write [sic] well."

Word origin: Brackets [L.]

(The word *brackets* comes from Latin.)

Parentheses within parentheses:

(Charles Dickens [1812-1870] had been trained as a stenographer.)

The virgule

The **virgule,** often called the "slant bar" by computer users, has four specific uses in punctuation. A virgule separates parts of an extended date.

Example: The 1994/95 basketball season.

Washington was born in February 1731/32

A virgule represents the word per in measurements:

Example: 186,000 mi./sec. (miles per second)

A virgule stands for the word or in the expression and/or. (Though not considered standard, it sometimes stands for the word or in other expressions also.)

A virgule separates lines of poetry that are quoted in run-on fashion in the text. (For readability, avoid this with more than four lines.)

Example: Ann continued,"And up and down the people go,/ Gazing where the lilies blow/ Round an island there below,/ The island of Shalott."

Capital Letters in Letters

There are two additional rules for capitalizing when writing letters.

1. Capitalize the first word and all nouns in the salutation (or greeting).

   Correct:

   Dear Sir:

   My dearest Aunt,

   Greetings!

2. Capitalize the first word in the complimentary closing.

   Correct:

   Sincerely,

   Truly yours,

   With best wishes,

Commas in Letter Writing

Use commas after the salutation (also called the greeting) in a personal letter and after the complimentary closing in all letters.

Salutation:

Dear Fred,

My dearest Emmeline,

Closing:

Sincerely,

Truly yours,

Colons in Special Cases

There are half a dozen special uses for the colon.

1. Numerical expressions of time.

Example: 5:31 p.m.

The colon goes between the hour and minute. If seconds are noted, a colon goes between the minute and second.

Example: He ran the marathon in 2:14:33.2.

(Two hours, fourteen minutes, and thirty-three point two seconds.)

Example: He ran the mile in 4:12.

(Four minutes and twelve seconds)

2. Periodical references in a bibliography or formal reference.

This may vary slightly depending on the form followed. Most frequently the reference is Volume: Issue Number or Volume: Page Number.

3. Bible references, Chapter: Verse.

Example: John 3:16

("The book of John, chapter 3, verse 16.")

4. Subtitles for books, periodicals, and articles are preceded by a colon.

Example: *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*

5. Salutations in business letters are followed by a colon.

Example:

Dear Sir:

Dear Ms. Hathaway:

6. Colons follow labels that identify important ideas meant to get attention.

Example:

Warning: To be opened by authorized personnel only.

Notice: Do not use before October 15.

Actividades y Ejercicios de autoevaluación

The activities are presented divided in Units, to better follow the contents.

UNIT 1

1.1 Make a five to seven item list of writing possibilities. Include one or two "off-the-wall" topics. For instance, if your assigned subject was the Reconstruction after the World War II, you might list "strange army hats" as an off-the-wall possibility and later decide it could make a good essay. If possible, talk your list over with a partner or small group.

1.2 Take two items from the list you made for Activity 1.1 and divide the subjects into parts on branching trees.

Dividing the Subject

Just copy the table below to your word processor, delete the World War II terms, and replace them with your own.

Social
Rationale for
Economic

Acts of Reconstruction of the Countries
For one part
Impact
For the other part

1.3 Try cross-matching and combining possibilities from your branching trees. Phrase the results as questions:

How did the different social values of the South and the North account for the problems of Reconstruction after the World War II?

What economic problems did the one part as a result of the World War II?

How did economic changes caused by the Reconstruction affect social relationships in the South?

Generate as many questions as possible. Don't worry about whether your questions are profound.

1.4 Practice freewriting for fifteen minutes.

1.5 Practice focusing your free writes. Write for twenty minutes about how you feel about writing; whether you like it or not, whether you've had much experience, what you think you need to work on most, what you'd like to write, or whatever else you want to say about writing.

1.6 Try "looping" your freewriting. Look back over an earlier free write and find a sentence or phrase that stands out for you. Write it down and use it as the starting point for a new free write. Repeat the process.

1.7 Select an object you have with you now (a pen, a ring, a watch, a shoe, a book) and start writing about it. Describe the object thoroughly. What is its shape, its colour, its texture? How long is it? Does it make a sound? Does it show signs of age? Does it have any taste or odour?

1.8 Select a book, any book. Begin writing down as many actual details about it as you can. What is its title? Who is its author? How many pages does it have? When was it published? By whom? Does it have a preface? What are its major divisions? Its subdivisions? What colour is it?

Don't give ideas or judgments about the book. Just give the facts. Write for about twenty minutes. At the end, write a one sentence wrap-up statement to tie your observations together.

1.9 Look back over the questions you wrote for previous activities. What use did you make of the Journalists' Questions? Use the Journalists' Questions, and especially the subtopics, to expand your list.

1.10 Look over the list you generated in Activity 1.8. Try to find patterns, areas of related interest, and arrange the questions in groups according to their common concerns.

1.11 Use the ratios of the Pentad method or dramatism to construct some master/subquestion combinations on a subject you're interested in writing about.

Agency:	___?
Agency/Purpose:	___?
Agency/Act:	___?

Agency/Scene:	___?
Agency/Agent:	___?

Try one from scratch:

__ :	___?
__ /__	___?
__ /__	___?
__ /__	___?
__ /__	___?

1.12 Pick a subject from the following list, or choose a subject of your own, and use the six topics to generate a list of questions.

List of subjects: your local newspaper, a t.v. show, a restaurant chain, a type of music, an organization or club.

Contrast:
Variation:
Distribution:
Particle:
Wave:
Field:

1.13 Select two questions from Activity 1.12 and freewrite for ten minutes on each one.

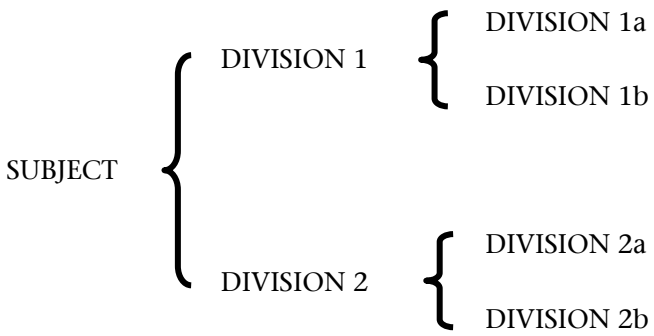
UNIT 2

2.1 Select one of the lists below and organize its individual items into categories. In the table that follows, or a similar one that you make, label your categories and copy the individual items into their appropriate spots. The table provides for four categories, but you don't need to have that many.

- List 1: onion, porkchop, apple, hamburger, banana, carrot, green bean, peach, chicken breast, potato, plum, hot dog
- List 2: Hoe, rake, spoon, rototiller, socket wrench, screwdriver, blender, fork, hammer, spatula, power drill
- List 3: Chicago, IL; New York, NY, Olympia, WA; Detroit, MI; Miami, FL; Portland, OR; Springfield, IL; Sacramento, CA; Lansing, MI; Seattle, WA; Albany, NY, Los Angeles, CA;

Category I	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
Items:	Items:	Items:	Items:

2.2. Pick one of the following subjects (or choose one of your own), and begin to analyze it by dividing it into parts, following the diagram: restaurants, teachers, automobiles, music, movies, politicians, dogs. Construct at least two levels to your division.



2.3 Pick one of the following lists (or make a list of your own) and synthesize it into a single general concept. Again, try to construct at least two levels to your system

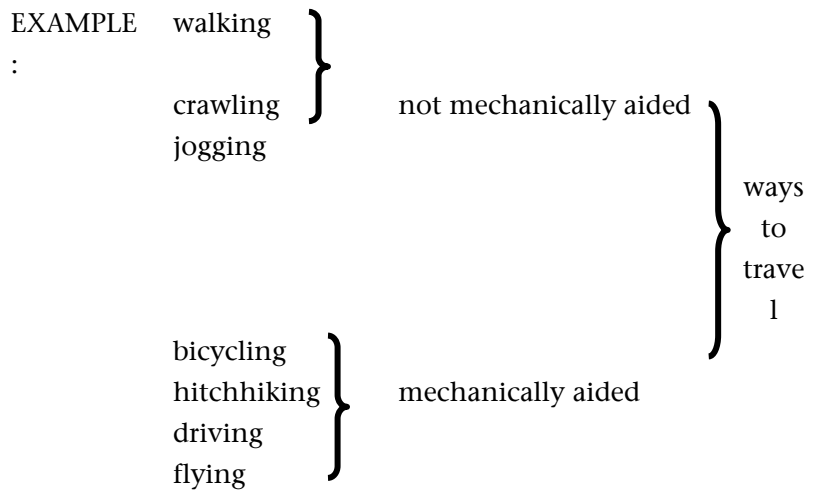
A. dolphin, carp, whale, salmon, elk, wolf, bear, bird, butterfly, wasp

B. lake, bathtub, river, ocean, creek, sea, swimming pool, fishtank, pond, hot tub

C. pencil, book, computer, pen, keyboard, floppy disk, monitor, notebook, typewriter

D. walking, flying, bicycling, hitchhiking, jogging, driving, crawling

E. shirt, pants, jacket, necklace, necktie, skirt, sweater, sock, shoe, blouse



2.4 Think of an organization you belong to, a business you've worked for, or a government agency that you're familiar with. Now make a pyramid chart showing the organizational structure.

2.5 Using a topic you've already generated or a new one that you're interested in writing about, make a mind map. Do it quickly, using bubbl.us or pencil and paper.

2.6 Choose a sequence of four or five paragraphs from a textbook and another sequence from a popular magazine. Study the paragraphing in each; consider the writing's audience and purpose as well as its subject and format. Then write your own paragraph explaining the similarities and differences you see in the paragraphing.

2.7 Create a short outline of your own using your word processor's Outline feature. Include at least seven items and three levels.

2.8 Some word groups listed below contain a subject and predicate and are therefore complete sentences. Others do not and can therefore be

considered fragments or parts of sentences. If the word group is a sentence, put an S in the corresponding space. If it is a fragment, put an Fr in the space.

a. Beyond the big river.
b. Huge waves lapped the prow.
c. More than enough money.
d. Sitting down together for Sunday breakfast.
e. Her wound healed.
f. Earlier and earlier each night.
g. The sun slipped below the horizon.
h. Steeping the neighborhood in shadow
i. Calling us in from our play.
j. Our mother was cooking supper.

2.9 The following word groups are all simple sentences. Label the subject, the verb, and the complement by writing the appropriate letter (S, V, C) above each.

a. Morning dawned gray and heavy.
b. That basket broke the old record.
c. You are not alone.
d. Storm warnings don't scare me.
e. The students attended the concert.
f. The chimpanzee learned sign language.
g. The new proposal deserves serious consideration.

2.10 Write five simple sentences (S V/C) without modifiers. Exchange and compare them.

2.11 Add modifiers to the base elements of the sentences in previous Activity 2.10.

2.12 Underline and label (S, V, or C) the main word clusters in each of the following sentences.

a. The maturing tadpole slowly grows legs.
b. Slow dancing is much more fun.
c. An elderly woman picked out a bright red hat.
d. The freshly lit match touched the pile of dry woodchips.
e. The clear water cooled her cheeks and forehead.
f. Small aspen leaves flickered and danced in the bright morning air.
g. Most team members brought their own gloves.
h. The swirling dust almost obscured the distant horizon.
i. Some old cars get pretty good mileage.
j. That wily old carp wouldn't even consider my shiny new spinner.

2.13 Use modification, coordination, or substitution to expand each of the following sentences.

a. Donnie devoured his waffles.
b. The teachers played football.
c. Rain flooded my basement.
d. Those boys won the trophy.
e. Doris is a mechanic.
f. The horses ate hay.
g. Clouds spilled their rain.
h. The semi snapped a stop sign.
i. Cowboys love horses.
j. The cheerleaders did handsprings.

2.14 Underline the base clause in each of the following sentences. Boldface the subordinating conjunction.

Example: Because Lisa was my best friend, I let her borrow my dress for the party.

a. Alan scores a point whenever we need one.
b. Since we changed the air cleaner, we've been getting better mileage.
c. They canceled the picnic because it was raining.
d. When I got home, my landlord was there waiting.
e. Stand here if you want to get wet.
f. Whenever the ponds freeze, I sharpen my skates.

2.15 Join the following pairs of sentences by using coordination and after, by using subordination.

a. My new watch was very expensive. It doesn't work.
b. We were new in town. Everyone made us feel welcome.
c. I studied long and hard. I passed the course.
d. These tires are bald. You should replace them.
e. I get home from class. I collapse on the couch.
f. The mail is here. Your magazine didn't arrive.
g. My heart pumps faster. My legs are tired.
h. The warm weather comes. My dog starts to shed.
i. You eat too many sweets. You will get cavities.
j. The subway was crowded. We found two seats.

2.16 Try inverting the following sentences.
Are any sentences better in normal order? Does inversion ever change the meaning?

a. The night is tender.
b. My brother burst into the house.
c. The lion climbed onto the table. d. Some rain must fall into each life.
e. Lithuania lost the war.
f. A rifle hung in the truck's rear window.
g. Money is the root of all evil.
h. The bottle was empty.
i. A rolling stone gathers no moss.

UNIT 3

3.1 Which is the style of the following text?

For one year, seven months, and one day, I was a parcel post clerk for the United States Postal Service. You know, the guy who takes your package stamped "Fragile!" and jams it into a sack filled with bricks, axes, and heavy farm equipment. At least that's what most people think parcel post clerks do. I hardly every smashed anything intentionally. As a matter of fact, after the supervisors got on my case for breaking a poorly packed shipment of china, I was downright gentle with the mail. Every day, Monday through Saturday, I would punch the clock at four in the afternoon and then for eight hours stand around a tall chute full of parcels and toss them into mail sacks. I had to be able to read an address label, match the address with the right sack, and then, whenever a sack filled up, lug it over to the loading cart. Some of those sacks weighed as much as 60 or 70 pounds, so I had to learn how to carry them without breaking my back. Most guys who work the parcel post have screwed-up backs. Don't get me wrong, though. This is no job for dummies. Because I sometimes had to move from the national sack racks to the local state rack, I had to "learn the code." That means I had to memorize the zip codes for all 1,600 post offices in the state--every town from Kinderhook to Watervliet, Clifton Springs to Hicksville. It almost drove me crazy memorizing those stupid codes. If I had failed the test, I would have been demoted from clerk to mail handler. As it turned out, I passed with a score of 98 percent. The pay was excellent, about $40,000 a year to start, but after one year, seven months, and one day I quit because the job got boring and I wanted to go back to school.

3.2 Outline the former text:

Job Title: _____

Duties:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills and Qualities Required:

_____
_____
_____

Hours: _____

Pay and Benefits: _____

3.3 Here is an effective topic sentence for a descriptive paragraph:

My most valuable possession is an old, slightly warped, blond guitar – the first instrument that I ever taught myself how to play.

This sentence not only identifies the prized belonging ("an old, slightly warped, blond guitar") but also suggests why the writer values it ("the first instrument that I ever taught myself how to play"). Some of the sentences below support this topic sentence with specific descriptive details. Others, however, offer information that would be inappropriate in a unified descriptive paragraph.

Read the sentences carefully, and then pick out only those that support the topic sentence with precise descriptive details.

1. It is a Madeira folk guitar, all scuffed and scratched and finger-printed.
2. My grandparents gave it to me on my thirteenth birthday.
3. I think they bought it at the Music Lovers Shop in Rochester where they used to live.
4. At the top is a bramble of copper-wound strings, each one hooked through the eye of a silver tuning key.
5. Although copper strings are much harder on the fingers than nylon strings, they sound much better than the nylon ones.
6. The strings are stretched down a long slim neck.
7. The frets on the neck are tarnished, and the wood has been worn down by years of fingers pressing chords.
8. It was three months before I could even tune the guitar properly, and another few months before I could manage the basic chords.
9. You have to be very patient when first learning how to play the guitar.
10. You should set aside a certain time each day for practice.
11. The body of the Madeira is shaped like an enormous yellow pear, one that has been slightly damaged in shipping.
12. A guitar can be awkward to hold, particularly if it seems bigger than you are, but you need to learn how to hold it properly if you're ever going to play it right.

13. I usually play sitting down because it's more comfortable that way.
14. The blond wood has been chipped and gouged to gray, particularly where the pick guard fell off years ago.
15. I have a Gibson now and hardly ever play the Madeira any more.

3.4 Here's the topic sentence of a descriptive paragraph titled "The Candle". The rest of the paragraph appears below. However, the sentences have been rearranged so that the descriptions appear in no logical order. Reorder the sentences to create a clear, well-organized paragraph.

I treasure my candle not for its beauty, its sentimental value, or even its usefulness, but for its simple, stark ugliness.

1. Rising crookedly out of the cup and collar is the candle, a pitifully short, stubby object.
2. Abandoned by a previous occupant of my room, the candle squats on the window sill, anchored by cobwebs and surrounded by dead flies.
3. This ugly little memorial consists of three parts: the base, the reflector, and the candle itself.
4. This aluminium flower is actually a wrinkled old Christmas light collar.
5. The base is a white, coffee-stained Styrofoam cup, its wide mouth pressed to the sill.
6. And by lighting the wick, any time I choose, I can melt this ugly candle away.
7. From the bottom of the cup (which is the top of the base) sprouts a space-age daisy: red, green, and silver petals intended to collect wax and reflect candle light.
8. The candle is about the same size and colour as a man's thumb, beaded with little warts of wax down the sides and topped by a tiny bent wick.

3.5 Write an account of a particular incident or encounter in your life that in one way or another illustrates a stage of growing up (at any age) or of personal development. You may focus on one specific experience or on a sequence of specific experiences.

UNIT 4

4.1 Write a letter to a member of your family and explain what your situation is.
4.2 Write a complain letter to a company because of their product was in bad conditions
4.3 Write a cover letter for your *résumé*
4.4 Write a letter of enquiry to apply for a job of your interest
4.5 Write a thank you letter with e-mail format to send after a job interview.

UNIT 5

5.1 Write an essay (500 words maximum) about one of the following topics:

Summer
Canada
Ocean

5.2 Write an essay (500 words maximum) about the topic you like best.

UNIT 6

6.1 Insert the appropriate punctuation to the following text:

28

Robert James Waller

And out of the pickup came Robert Kincaid look ing like some vision from a never written book called *An Illustrated History of Shamans*

His tan military style shirt was tacked down to his back with perspiration there were wide dark circles of it under his arms The top three buttons were undone and she could see tight chest muscles just below the plain silver chain around his neck Over his shoulders were wide orange suspenders the kind worn by people who spent a lot of time in wilderness areas

He smiled I m sorry to bother you but I m looking for a covered bridge out this way and I can t find it I think I m temporarily lost He wiped his forehead with a blue bandanna and smiled again

His eyes looked directly at her and she felt something jump inside The eyes the voice the face the silver hair the easy way he moved his body old ways disturbing ways ways that draw you in Ways that whisper to you in the final moment before sleep comes when the barriers have fallen Ways that rearrange the molecular space between male and female regardless of spe cies

The generations must roll and the ways whisper only of that single requirement nothing more The power is infinite the design supremely ele gant The ways are unswerving their goal is clear

29

The Bridges of Madison County

The ways are simple we have made them seem complicated Francesca sensed this without know ing she was sensing it sensed it at the level of her cells And there began the thing that would change her forever

A car went past on the road trailing dust behind it and honked Francesca waved back at Floyd Clark s brown arm sticking out of his Chevy and turned back to the stranger You re pretty close The bridge is only about two miles from here Then after twenty years of living the close life a life of circumscribed behavior and hidden feelings demanded by a rural culture Francesca Johnson surprised herself by saying I ll be glad to show it to you if you want

Why she did that she never had been sure A young girl s feelings rising like a bubble through water and bursting out maybe after all these years She was not shy but not forward either The only thing she could ever conclude was that Robert Kincaid had drawn her in somehow after only a few seconds of looking at him

He was obviously taken aback slightly by her offer But he recovered quickly and with a serious look on his face said he d appreciate that From the back steps she picked up the cowboy boots she wore for farm chores and walked out to his truck following him around to the passenger side

Just take me a minute to make room for you

Solucionario

UNIT 1

All the activities in this unit have open answers so you have to follow the lesson to do your best.

UNIT 2

Exercise 2.8

a. Beyond the big river. (F)
b. Huge waves lapped the prow. (S)
c. More than enough money.(F)
d. Sitting down together for Sunday breakfast. (F)
e. Her wound healed. (S)
f. Earlier and earlier each night. (F)
g. The sun slipped below the horizon. (S)
h. Steeping the neighbourhood in shadow. (F)
i. Calling us in from our play. (S)
j. Our mother was cooking supper. (F)

Exercise 2.9

a. Morning dawned gray and heavy.
S V C

b. That basket broke the old record.
S V C

c. You are not alone.
S V C

d. Storm warnings don't scare me.
S V C

e. The students attended the concert.
S V C

f. The chimpanzee learned sign language.
S V C

g. The new proposal deserves serious consideration.
S V C

Exercise 2.12

a. The maturing tadpole slowly grows legs.
S C V C

b. Slow dancing is much more fun.
S V C

c. An elderly woman picked out a bright red hat.
S V C

d. The freshly lit match touched the pile of dry woodchips.
S V C

e. The clear water cooled her cheeks and forehead.
S V C

f. Small aspen leaves flickered and danced in the bright morning air.
S V C

g. Most team members brought their own gloves.
S V C

h. The swirling dust almost obscured the distant horizon.
S C V C

i. Some old cars get pretty good mileage.
S V C

j. That wily old carp wouldn't even consider my shiny new spinner.
S V C V C

Exercise 2.13

a. Donnie devoured his waffles. Donnie devoured his free-fat waffles that were softer than traditional ones.

b. The teachers played football. The teachers that have remained in the school played football

c. Rain flooded my basement. Heavy rain fell in the early morning flooded my basement.

d. Those boys won the trophy. Those boys with red hair won the trophy deservedly.

e. Doris is a mechanic. Doris, my younger neighbour, is a mechanic.

f. The horses ate hay. The horses that run in the Equestrian ate hay.

g. Clouds spilled their rain. Grey clouds spilled their rain in the city.

h. He snapped a stop sign. While he was driving, he snapped a stop sign that was next to the road.

i. Cowboys love horses. Cinema cowboys always love their horses.

j. The cheerleaders did handsprings. The blond cheerleaders did wonderful handsprings.

Exercise 2.14

a. Alan scores a point whenever we need one.

b. Since we changed the air cleaner, we've been getting better mileage.

c. They cancelled the picnic because it was raining.

d. When I got home, my landlord was there waiting.

e. Stand here if you want to get wet.

f. Whenever the ponds freeze, I sharpen my skates.

Exercise 2.15

a. My new watch, that doesn't work, was very expensive.

b. Although we were new in town, everyone made us feel welcome.

c. I studied long and hard so I passed the course.

d. These tires, that you should replace, are bald.

e. When I get home from class, I collapse on the couch.

f. The mail is here but your magazine didn't arrive.

g. My heart pumps faster and my legs are tired.

h. The warm weather comes because my dog starts to shed.

i. You eat too many sweets and you will get cavities.

j. Although the subway was crowded, we found two seats.

Exercise 2.16

a. The night is tender. Tender is the night

b. The lion climbed onto the table. Onto the table the lion climbed.

c. Some rain must fall into each life. Into each life must fall some rain.

d. Lithuania lost the war. The war was lost by Lithuania.

e. A rifle hung in the truck's rear window. In the truck's rear window hung a rifle.

f. Money is the root of all evil. The root of all evil is money.
g. The bottle was empty. Empty was the bottle.
h. A rolling stone gathers no moss. No moss is gathered by a rolling stone.

UNIT 3

Exercise 3.1
A Personal, Informal Job Description

Exercise 3.2
Job Title: Parcel Post Clerk

Duties:
to read an address label,
match the address with the right sack
memorize the zip codes of 1600 post offices

Skills and Qualities Required:
memory
to pass the test

Hours: 8 hours a day from Monday to Saturday

Pay and Benefits: 40,000 dollars/ per year

Exercise 3.3
1. It is a Madeira folk guitar, all scuffed and scratched and finger-printed.
2. My grandparents gave it to me on my thirteenth birthday.
8. It was three months before I could even tune the guitar properly, and another few months before I could manage the basic chords.
9. You have to be very patient when first learning how to play the guitar.
10. You should set aside a certain time each day for practice.
12. A guitar can be awkward to hold, particularly if it seems bigger than you are, but you need to learn how to hold it properly
if you're ever going to play it right.
15. I have a Gibson now and hardly ever play the Madeira any more.

Exercise 3.4
2; 3; 5; 7; 4; 1; 8; 6.

UNIT 4

All the activities in this unit have open answers as you have to follow the outline you can get at the lesson.

4.1 Informal personal letter
4.2. Complaint letter
4.3. Cover letter
4.4. Applying for a job
4.5. E-mail after a job interview

UNIT 5

All the activities in this unit have open answers as you have to follow the outline you can get at the lesson.

UNIT 6

6.1 See punctuations in the image below (on the next page):

28

Robert James Waller

And out of the pickup came Robert Kincaid, looking like some vision from a never-written book called *An Illustrated History of Shamans*.

His tan military-style shirt was tacked down to his back with perspiration; there were wide, dark circles of it under his arms. The top three buttons were undone, and she could see tight chest muscles just below the plain silver chain around his neck. Over his shoulders were wide orange suspenders, the kind worn by people who spent a lot of time in wilderness areas.

He smiled. "I'm sorry to bother you, but I'm looking for a covered bridge out this way, and I can't find it. I think I'm temporarily lost." He wiped his forehead with a blue bandanna and smiled again.

His eyes looked directly at her, and she felt something jump inside. The eyes, the voice, the face, the silver hair, the easy way he moved his body, old ways, disturbing ways, ways that draw you in. Ways that whisper to you in the final moment before sleep comes, when the barriers have fallen. Ways that rearrange the molecular space between male and female, regardless of species.

The generations must roll, and the ways whisper only of that single requirement, nothing more. The power is infinite, the design supremely elegant. The ways are unswerving, their goal is clear.

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The Bridges of Madison County

The ways are simple; we have made them seem complicated. Francesca sensed this without knowing she was sensing it, sensed it at the level of her cells. And there began the thing that would change her forever.

A car went past on the road, trailing dust behind it, and honked. Francesca waved back at Floyd Clark's brown arm sticking out of his Chevy and turned back to the stranger. "You're pretty close. The bridge is only about two miles from here." Then, after twenty years of living the close life, a life of circumscribed behavior and hidden feelings demanded by a rural culture, Francesca Johnson surprised herself by saying, "I'll be glad to show it to you, if you want."

Why she did that, she never had been sure. A young girl's feelings rising like a bubble through water and bursting out, maybe, after all these years. She was not shy, but not forward, either. The only thing she could ever conclude was that Robert Kincaid had drawn her in somehow, after only a few seconds of looking at him.

He was obviously taken aback, slightly, by her offer. But he recovered quickly and with a serious look on his face said he'd appreciate that. From the back steps she picked up the cowboy boots she wore for farm chores and walked out to his truck, following him around to the passenger side.

"Just take me a minute to make room for you;

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