

# 200 ENGLISH GRAMMAR MISTAKES!

A WORKBOOK OF COMMON GRAMMAR AND  
PUNCTUATION ERRORS WITH EXAMPLES, EXERCISES  
AND SOLUTIONS SO YOU NEVER MAKE THEM AGAIN



MELONY JACOBS

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**A Workbook of Common Grammar and  
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**Melony Jacobs**

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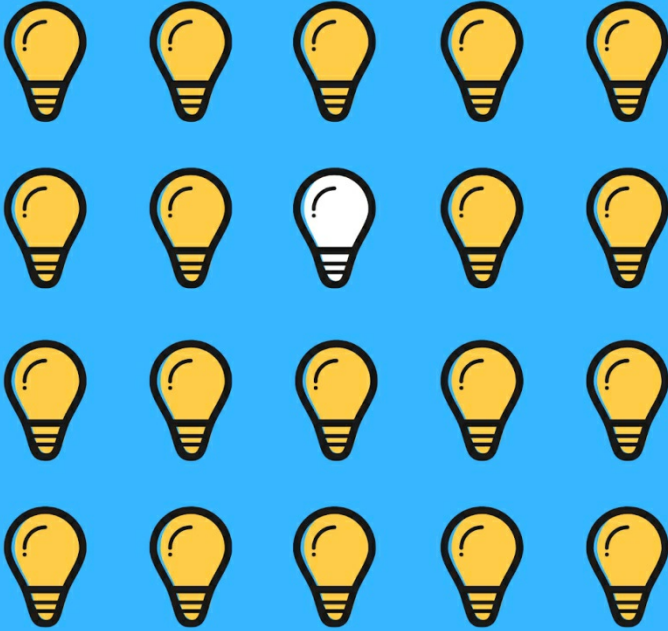
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# Introduction

The English language has its grammar outline. This outline is all about medium and convention that determines and guides how to speak and write. In grammar, this outline includes word spelling, word inflection, and word arrangement in sentence making. More importantly, the English language is not static; rather, it is dynamic. The language has gone through much evolution from the days of retaining German forms of the plural of some words until now. Therefore, communication requires adequate and proper understanding of grammar.

I am Melony Jacobs, a 52-year-old professional editor and proofreader. I studied writing and the English language in university. Hence, you can count on my experience and expertise to help you to be more effective as a speaker and writer of one of the most popular languages in the world. I am committed to learning and that is why I read at least a book every week. I have come across many common mistakes people make when they speak and write. Therefore, I have decided to do my share to help others by putting this material together.

I am on a personal quest to help people improve their English grammar skills. This book came about [\[T2\]](#) because I believe a book is the best way to put all the information together in a coherent manner. English grammar simply means how the English language is structured. It is a ‘system’ of how the English language hangs together. It is really necessary that you develop a good grammar structure for many reasons, as stated below:

- **To have clear communication:** Clear communication is fundamental for any individual. The biggest problem that arises from poor grammar is unclear communication. People tend to have incoherence in speeches simply because of grammatical blunder. If you make a mistake of including a singular verb where inappropriate, you may communicate a wrong message.

For example, if you are just deplaned and you say; “Our flight time is approximately forty-two minutes,” “ The person you’re talking to may think you haven’t boarded the plane at all. However, the correct thing to say is: “Our flight time **was** approximately forty-two minutes.” (past tense)

- **Wrong impression:** Psychologists say, “first impressions are lasting.” If you are a job applicant, the first thing you may want to take care of is your cover letter and curriculum vitae. For example, if the cover letter is an embodiment of grammatical mistakes, you may have practically created a wrong impression of yourself irrespective of how qualified you are for the job. Also, if you are preparing or presenting a proposal for a project, you need to have a good command of the English language to make sense to your audience.

Sometimes, there may be disagreements about what correct or incorrect English is. Incorrect grammar is commonly used in informal communication or speech. But does that make it correct and appropriate? Correct grammar remains correct irrespective of where and how it is used (whether formally or informally), likewise, incorrect grammar. Therefore, it is important that you strive to learn and be effective in the way you handle the English language. You should not stop learning. Hence, leveraging the guidelines in a book like this will expose you to a whole range of grammar mistakes and thereby sharpen your knowledge.

In this book, the errors are discussed by providing you with examples. The correct versions are shown thereafter. It is important that you are able to consolidate what you are learning. Learning cannot be said to have taken place when you cannot recall the information. Any information that cannot be recalled is useless to you and others. To help you consolidate your learning so that you won't make the same errors again, there are multiple-choice quiz questions for you in this book. After the correct versions have been highlighted, you will have multiple-choice questions to answer to help you recall.

Foundational English grammar mistakes in various parts of speech are discussed in this book. In other words, you will learn to avoid basic mistakes when using verbs, nouns, adverbs, pronouns, and adjectives. There are also common mistakes people make when using grammar components like heteronyms, homographs, and homophones. You will get to know the correct way to go about the use of these grammar components, as well and much more.

In the social media era, it has become much more important to be careful

about the way you speak and write. Your mistakes can go viral in no time. It is not right to bully people and I will never advocate that. However, the reality is that there are unscrupulous people in this world who will pounce on the errors of others mercilessly. Hence, you need to protect yourself from being a prey to such malicious people. Thankfully, you don't need any sophisticated weapon to protect yourself but adequate and constant learning.

Therefore, I encourage you to read this book with the desire to improve your grammar skills. When you improve your communication and writing skills, you are adding more value to yourself. So don't read this book just because you're not so busy and can't find something else to do with your time. Study it to get better and become more effective. I have done my part to put together accurate information in a coherent way to boost your effectiveness. The ball is in your court now to study the playbook with the right attitude. I know you will be off and running. Let's get started!

# Chapter 1: Foundational/Basic English Grammar Mistakes

Not one grammatical blunder in the English language can be overlooked, because they can be misleading. In this chapter, we will explore basic English grammar mistakes and their correct versions. These errors have to do with wrong usage of different parts of speech such as verbs, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Unlike other grammatical gaffes, [\[T3\]](#) these mistakes are often obvious. People make such mistakes due to ignorance or negligence. However, mistakes remain what they are regardless of the reasons they occur.

## Verbs

Verbs are simply action words that make your sentences meaningful. When using verbs, there are various forms to take note of.

### Verb forms

Base form	S-form	Past form	ing-form	Past/passive participle
Play	Plays	Played	Playing	Played
Join	Joins	Joined	Joining	Joined
Find	Finds	Found	Finding	Found
Think	Thinks	Thought	Thinking	Thought
Discuss	Discusses	Discussed	Discussing	Discussed

Let's look at the following sentences with wrong usage, then correct form:

Incorrect: He **play** table tennis.

He **steal** the bread.

He **find** it difficult to solve.

Correct: he **plays** table tennis.

He **stole** the bread.

He **found** it difficult to solve.

Remember: use an "e" in the -ed (past simple and "-ed" form) of regular verbs. And, when you have regular verbs where the vowel changes from "i" to "a" to "u," use "a" in the past simple and "u" in the "-ed" form.

Incorrect: She **enjoy** the movie.

I was very thirsty so I **drunk** water.

Correct: She **enjoyed** the movie. (past simple)

I was very thirsty so I **drank** water. (past simple)

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate option from the following past simple forms:**

1. The ship \_\_\_\_\_ before we got there. (A. had sink B. had sank C. had sunk)

Answer: C

2. The film \_\_\_\_\_ at 3 p.m. (A. began B. begun)

Answer: A

When using verbs, some forms may be used in more than one case:

a) Imperative use case, when it begins a sentence such as “Play football with me.” This makes a complete meaning on its own.

b) Present-tense use case, such as “You play very well.” **NOT** “You plays very well.”

c) Infinitive use case, such as “He’d like to play.” **NOT** “He’d like playing.”

In the above listed use cases, any attempt to change the form of verb in the order of the sentences will render the sentence incorrect.

Watch out for irregular verbs that have base form “-d” and past tense “-t” such as:

Incorrect: He **spend** millions of dollars on the surgery.

Correct: He **spent** millions of dollars on the surgery.

Do not use regular past simple “-ed” form for irregular verbs.

Incorrect: He **spended** weeks before coming.

Correct: He **spent** weeks before coming.

Some prepositional words (e.g., about, for, and in) are not used with some verbs used in certain forms.

Incorrect: The school board **discussed about** expelling the student.

Correct: The school board **discussed** expelling the student.

There are prepositional words that fit with prepositional verbs, e.g., lie under, listen to, depend on, wait on, etc.

Incorrect: I like to **listen** him speak.

Correct: I like to **listen to** him speak.

Incorrect: He loves to **wait upon** his parents.

Correct: He loves to **wait on** his parents.

**MCQs:** Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ along with me. (A. Read B. Reading C. Is reading)

Answer: A

2. He likes \_\_\_\_\_. (A. dancing B. dance)

Answer: A

3. You should \_\_\_\_\_ the floor. (A. scrubs B. scrub)

Answer: B

4. I \_\_\_ he was coming yesterday. (A. learned B. learnt C. was learning)

Answer: A

5. She \_\_\_\_\_ my assistance on her assignment. (A. request B. requested C. requested for)

Answer: B

6. We \_\_\_\_\_ his appearance in court last week. (A. demanded B. demanded for C. demand)

Answer: A

7. We \_\_\_\_\_ God. (A. depend B. depending on C. depend on)

Answer: C

## Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, other adverbs or adjectives. An adverb usually answers questions of: **what way, why, where** and **when**. Some students often make mistakes[T4] when using adverbial words in statements. The study below important adverbial rules to follow when making sentences.

Adverbial use of: **very, much, so, and too**

“Much” is a comparative word and should be used in comparative degree and past participle tense.

Incorrect: Joe is **more** taller than his sister.

Correct: Joe is **much** taller than his sister.

Use adverb clause **that** with **so**, and **too** with the infinitive **to**.

Incorrect: The lion is tough, other animals tremble at its roar.

Correct: The lion is **so** tough **that** other animals tremble at its roar.

Incorrect: The candidate is **too** good for the job.

Correct: The candidate is **too** good **to** do the job.

Using a second negative word with words such as: **seldom, barely, never, often, merely, rarely**, etc., should be avoided. Any of the categories can stand alone.

Incorrect: Lisa **barely never** comes to class.

Correct: Lisa **barely** comes to class.

Incorrect: I **hardly don't** know anyone in the church.

Correct: I **hardly** know anyone in the church.

Remember: don't use any of the words with their negative-meaning words.

When using **as**: use the adverb **as** when introducing predicative verb words

like **know, describe, regard,** etc. Also, avoid using the adverb **as** when introducing predicative verb words such as **choose, make, call,** etc.

Incorrect: He was described a bully.

Correct: He was described **as** a bully.

Incorrect: Albert Einstein is called **as** genius.

Correct: Albert Einstein is called genius.

When answering questions, **yes** must go with affirmative responses, while **no** must go with negative answers.

Incorrect: Have you eaten today?

No, I have eaten.

Correct: Have you eaten today?

**No**, I have **not** eaten.

Do not place adverbs of manner before intransitive verbs.

Incorrect: The lady **confidently** spoke to the tough guy.

Correct: The lady spoke **confidently** to the tough guy.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Australia is a \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful country. (A. so B. very C. much)

Answer: B

I was forbidden \_\_\_\_\_. (A. not to go B. to go C. never to go)

Answer: B

It appears this house is \_\_\_\_\_ bigger than the former house. (A. more B. much C. very)

Answer: B

Cow milk is \_\_\_\_\_ nutritious. (A. too B. very C. much)

Answer: B

The student is \_\_\_\_\_brilliant \_\_\_\_\_ his teachers were proud of him. (A. very, that B. so, that)



Answer: B

He \_\_\_\_ comes late to meetings. (A. often B. often always C. barely never)

Answer: A

“Are you coming for the test?” (A. “Yes, I am not coming.” B. “Yes, I am coming.”)

Answer: B

She \_\_\_\_\_. (A. beautifully sang B. sang beautifully)

Answer: B

## Adjectives

As a noun defines or names something, an adjective gives more information about a noun or pronoun. It can appear in regular, comparative or superlative forms. When qualifying, they come directly before the noun or pronoun being qualified, e.g., He is a **big** man. The word **big** here, gives additional information about the noun **man**.

Below are rules to pay rapt attention to, to avoid mistakes in adjective usage when making sentences:

Avoid using double comparatives in sentences.

Incorrect: James is **more bigger** than Joseph.

Correct: James is **bigger than** Joseph.

The adjective **many** goes with countable nouns (e.g.: miles, books, cars, etc.) While, the adjective **much** goes with uncountable nouns (water, air). Also, **less** is used with uncountable nouns, and **fewer** is used with countable nouns.

Incorrect: There are **much** miles to cover in the race.

Correct: There are **many** miles to cover in the race.

Incorrect: The soup has **many** water.

Correct: The soup has **much** water.

Incorrect: I have **less** questions to answer.

Correct: I have **fewer** questions to answer.

Simply add "-er" as a comparative to words like strong, fat, tall, etc.

Incorrect: And the boy grew **strong** and **strong**.

Correct: And the boy grew **stronger** and **stronger**.

Qualifiers such as "both," and "all" must go before possessive words.

Incorrect: He lost **his all** investment.

Correct: He lost **all his** investment.

Avoid the mistakes of using **farther** and **further** in comparing distance.

Incorrect: Which of the following places is **further**?

Correct: Which of the following places is **farther**?

The use of **prefer**:

Incorrect: I prefer biking **from** skating.

Correct: I prefer biking **to** skating.

Use the superlative adjective (e.g., most) in the latter part of sentences.

Incorrect: My brother is the **most** enterprising and ablest man I have seen.

Correct: My brother is the ablest and **most** enterprising man I have seen.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

1. Are your dresses \_\_\_\_\_ shorter these days? (A. More B. much)

Answer: B

A

2. There is too \_\_\_\_\_ noise in the air. (A. much B. many)

Answer: A

3. I have \_\_\_ worries than you do. (A. less B. fewer)

Answer: B

4. We will go out \_\_\_\_\_. (A. next Friday B. Friday next)

Answer: A

5. \_\_\_ question in the script carries equal marks. (A. Every B. Each)

Answer: B

6. Dad gave me \_\_\_\_\_ money to spend at school. (A. little B. a little  
C. few D. small)

Answer: B

7. Tell me the \_\_\_ news. (A. last B. latest)

Answer: B

8. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the story was emphasized. (A. important B.  
importance)

Answer: B

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words used to join a word to another word, a sentence to another sentence, and a word to a clause. For example: He was playing music, yet I studied. Here, "He was playing music" is a sentence, and "I studied" is another sentence. Word "yet" is simply joining the two sentences together to convey key information in the compound sentence. There are several conjoining words that students commonly misuse in sentences. The following important rules are to be followed when using conjunctions:

Use **not only** followed by **but also**.

Incorrect: She did **not only** hug him, she kissed him.

Correct: Not **only did** she hug him, **but** also kissed him.

The use of **though** instead of **although**:

Incorrect: You look as **although** you have seen a monster!

Correct: You look as **though** you have seen a monster!

Avoid using **not** with **lest**, because **lest** is a negative word. When used, **should** must follow.

Incorrect: You had better work hard **lest not** you become poor.

Correct: You had better work hard **lest** you **should** become poor/lest you become poor.

In the absence of **should** or **shall**, "else" is appropriate. In essence, when you have will, would, or may instead of should or shall, "else" will replace "**lest**."

Incorrect: Drive fast to the airport **else**, you will miss your flight.

Correct: Drive fast to the airport, **or else** you will miss your flight.

**Both** must accompany **and**.

Incorrect: Both Jackson, Julian are together.

Correct: **Both** Jackson **and** Julian are together.

The use of **other**, **rather** and **than**:

Incorrect: I would leave **than** sit here with you.

Correct: I would **rather** leave **than** sit here with you.

Incorrect: **Than** sleeping late, I love studying.

Correct: **Other than** sleeping late, I love studying.

The use of the conditional **if** is different from **whether**. This is because **if** has a conditional connotation, while **whether** connotes uncertainty.

Incorrect: He doesn't come early, he will not be allowed entry.

Correct: **If** he doesn't come early, he will not be allowed entry.  
(conditional)

Incorrect: She likes it or not, she will be punished

Correct: **Whether** she likes it or not, she will be punished.  
(certainty)

**Either or** and **neither nor**:

Incorrect: We came to the spa but we didn't meet Jane and John.

Correct: We came to the spa but we met **neither** Jane nor John/we

met **neither** of them.

Incorrect: My client is not mad and not crazy, the lawyer said.  
Correct: My client is **neither** mad **nor** crazy, the lawyer said.

Incorrect: I love pigging out on ice-cream **or** yogurt.  
Correct: I love pigging out on **either** ice-cream **or** yogurt.

Incorrect: It is clear; you are telling a lie **or** saying the truth.  
Correct: It is clear; you are **either** telling a lie **or** saying the truth.

Incorrect: **Neither** would he eat the food or let us eat it.  
Correct: **Neither** would he eat the food **nor** let us eat it.

The use of **such** and **that**: usually, **such that** is used when stating the extent or degree of something.

Incorrect: The rubber stretched that it broke.  
Correct: The rubber was stretched **such that** it broke.

Incorrect: The stock market became flooded that it crashed.  
Correct: The stock market became flooded **such that** it crashed.

Like is used to explain similarity and should be followed by a pronoun. Using **as**, it should be followed by a clause.

Incorrect: She sang alike **as** my sister.  
Correct: She sang **like** my sister.

Incorrect: He was as bold **like** a lion.  
Correct: He was **as** bold **as** a lion.

Incorrect: He ate like he was walking.  
Correct: He ate as he was walking.

One conjoining word is enough to join two clauses successfully.

Incorrect: The director asked **that** what was his grade.

Correct: The director asked **what his grade was**.

Incorrect: He's often scared **that** he might repeat the course.

Correct: He's often scared he **might repeat the course**.

Incorrect: **Because** he wasn't quick enough, **therefore** we finished before him.

Correct: **Because**he wasn't quick enough, we finished before him.

Incorrect: He was angry. He slapped him.

Correct: He was angry, **so** he slapped him.

Incorrect: **Since** he is smart, **so** he always has his way.

Correct: **Since**he is smart, he always has his way / He is smart, so he always has his way.

The use of **so as** in a sentence is usually to indicate a purpose. When **so as**, be sure of the phrase that follows.

Incorrect: He attended the gathering **so that** he can catch the perpetrators.

Correct: He attended the gathering **so as** to catch the perpetrators.

### **MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

1. He had scarcely eaten \_\_\_. (A. that his friend came B. when his friend came)

Answer: B

2. \_\_\_ did he help the poor kid, \_\_\_ he took him home. (A. Not only/neither B. Neither/nor B. Not only/but also)

Answer: C

3. Read up \_\_\_\_\_ you should forget. (A. or else B. lest C. else)

Answer: B

4. Bring me the report \_\_\_ I forget. (A. lest B. else)

Answer: A

5. She walked hurriedly \_\_\_\_ she would miss the bus. (A. or else B. lest C. else)

Answer: B

6. \_\_\_\_ Jude \_\_\_\_ Martin are good English students. (A. either/or B. both/and C. both/or)

Answer: B

## **Prepositions**

To put in a simple way, prepositions serve as links within sentences. A preposition is used to indicate a relationship between nouns, phrases and/or pronouns. They are mostly very short words that stand in front of nouns. Also, they connect time, location, people, and objects when used in a sentence. Some of the examples are **of, to, under, in, into, with**, etc. Prepositions may be cumbersome to deal with in sentences. However, there are a few highlighted facts applicable that students may study as a guide to acclimatizing themselves with prepositional words.

- In the English language, there are more than one hundred prepositions.
- Prepositions are generally followed by nouns and pronouns.
- In making clear sentences, specific prepositions are required. this means some prepositions are not always substitutable. E.g., the use of the preposition "in" may not work in place of the preposition "on" in all cases.

Grammatical errors occur in the basic three types of preposition: preposition of time, place, and direction.

### **Preposition of Time**

Prepositions in this category help to state when something had happened, has happened, or will happen. Examples of preposition of time are: **at, on, in, before** and **after**.

Abide by the following rules when using the preposition of time.

Use preposition **on** for days and dates of the month.

Incorrect: School resumes **in** Monday.

Correct: School resumes **on** Monday.

Incorrect: Christmas is **in** December 25th.

Correct: Christmas is **on** December 25th.

Incorrect: I got my birthday present **in** my birthday.

Correct: I got my birthday present **on** my birthday.

Use the preposition "in" when stating years, months, seasons, centuries and times of day.

Incorrect: My wife and I got married **on** 2002.

Correct: My wife and I got married **in** 2002.

Incorrect: Every year, my family vacation falls **on** spring.

Correct: Every year, my family vacation falls **in** spring.

Incorrect: Salvation came to us **on** the twentieth century.

Correct: Salvation came to us **in** the twentieth century.

Use **at** with **night**, **noon**, or a **festive occasion**.

Incorrect: We have our moments **in** the night.

Correct: We have our moments **at** night.

Incorrect: I go hiking **in** Christmastime.

Correct: I go hiking **at** Christmastime.

Incorrect: I will see you **in** noon.

Correct: I will see you **at** noon.

Use **at** when you indicate exactness/accuracy.

Incorrect: The lines met **in** exactly 90 degrees.

Correct: The lines met **at** exactly 90 degrees.

Incorrect: We will see each other **in** 4 p.m.

Correct: We will see each other **at** 4 p.m.

Incorrect: His shift is **in** 3 p.m.



Correct: His shift is **at** 3 p.m.

Incorrect: We eat dinner **in** 7 p.m. every night.

Correct: We eat dinner **at** 7 p.m. every night.

Avoid wrong usage of other time prepositions such as: **during, until, throughout, around, and about.**

Incorrect: The politician held the rally **around** the month.

Correct: The politician held the rally **throughout** the month.

Incorrect: The sun comes out **around** 6 a.m. every morning.

Correct: The sun comes out **about** 6 a.m. every morning.

Incorrect: She waited **till** she heard you had gone.

Correct: She waited **until** she heard you had gone.

Incorrect: He ran **round about** the circle.

Correct: He ran **around** the circle.

Incorrect: I met my wife **in** the holiday.

Correct: I met my wife **during** the holiday.

### **Preposition of Place**

These are prepositions that indicate position. Avoid the errors shown in the following examples:

Incorrect: There is something hanging **in** the wall.

Correct: There is something hanging **on** the wall.

Incorrect: There are images **in** the page.

Correct: There are images **on** the page.

Incorrect: Maxwell is **at** Dubai, visiting his niece **at** the hospital.

Correct: Maxwell is **in** Dubai, visiting his niece **in** the hospital.

Incorrect: I am **on** the crossroads.

Correct: I am **at** the crossroads.

Incorrect: Let us meet **in** the airport.

Correct: Let us meet **at** the airport.

Use "inside" to indicate nonabstract positions and "in" for abstract positions.

Incorrect: The manual is locked **in** the car.

Correct: The manual is locked **inside** the car.

Incorrect: The fish is **in** the refrigerator.

Correct: The fish is **inside** the refrigerator.

Incorrect: I am living **inside** a province of Canada.

Correct: I am living **in** a province of Canada.

### **Preposition of Direction**

Avoid mixing prepositions such as: **over**, **around**, and **past**.

Incorrect: Our horses run **across** the ranch every morning.

Correct: Our horses run **around** the ranch every morning.

Incorrect: That vehicle zoomed **passed** the truck.

Correct: That vehicle zoomed **past** the truck.

### **MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

He stepped \_\_\_\_\_ the house. (A. out B. outside C. in)

Answer: B

He flew \_\_\_\_ of town. (A. out B. outside C. away)

Answer: A

\_\_\_\_ 30th of January marks our wedding anniversary. (A. The B. In C. At)

Answer: A

We shall hang out \_\_\_\_\_ 6 o'clock tomorrow. (A. on B. at C. in)

Answer: B

They'll meet \_\_\_\_ five minutes. (A. at B. in)

Answer: B

## **Noun**

When you come in contact with the names of people, things (living or nonliving things), countable and uncountable, then, you are talking about nouns.

Avoid the following fundamental and likely errors in nouns:

Words like **furniture**, **luggage**, **baggage**, **information**, **news**, and **advice** are naturally singular.

Incorrect: Please pack your **baggages**.

Correct: Please pack your **baggage**.

Incorrect: We are ready to receive **informations** on the product.

Correct: We are ready to receive **information** on the product.

Incorrect: **These are the news** I love to hear.

Correct: **This is the news** I love to hear.

Incorrect: We are buying some **furnitures**.

Correct: We are buying some **furniture**.

Incorrect: Our government needs to care for the **poors**.

Correct: Our government needs to care for the **poor**.

Incorrect: Jesus provided food for the **blinds**.

Correct: Jesus provided food for the **blind**.

Incorrect: He said his **need** are numerous.

Correct: He said his **needs** are numerous.

Incorrect: Is there **bread**s on the table?

Correct: Is there **bread** on the table?

Do not use **brother** with **cousin**.

Incorrect: He's my **cousin brother**.

Correct: He's my **cousin**. (cousin is either male or female. "He" already

states the sex)

Incorrect: My friends **has** arrived.

Correct: My friends **have** arrived.

Incorrect: The counselor gave me some **advise**.

Correct: The counselor gave me some **advice**.

Incorrect: I've got **five dollars** note in my wallet.

Correct: I've got a **five dollar** note in my wallet.

Incorrect: I have two dozens apple.

Correct: I have two dozen apples.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Kindly put your \_\_\_\_ here. (A. signature B. sign)

Answer: A

She is my \_\_\_\_\_. (A. cousin sister B. cousin)

Answer: B

He was my captain when I was in \_\_\_\_\_. (A. boarding B. the boarding house C. board)

Answer: B

God can heal the \_\_\_\_\_. (A. deafs B. deaf)

Answer: B

The \_\_\_ here is not pretty enough. (A. sceneries B. scenery)

Answer: B

## **Pronouns**

Words used to avoid repetition of nouns are called pronouns.

Errors in pronouns may not appear common among English speakers, but the fact cannot be ruled out that for efficient communication, the pronoun is a fundamental part of speech that gets misused among students and other

learners.

Pronoun errors occur in English when there is a disagreement between the pronouns and the number of nouns. If noun is singular, the pronoun has to be singular and vice versa. Another way errors occur in pronouns is when the verb does not agree with the subject of the sentence. However, these two errors are intertwined.

The following are examples of common pronoun errors in grammar. The use of **one of**, **some of**, and **none of** must be written so that the verb agrees with the subject. Below, singular verbs **eats**, and **was** agree with singular subjects.

Incorrect: **One of** my classmates **eat** a lot.

Correct: **One of** my classmates **eats** a lot.

Incorrect: **Some of** the king's servant **is** here.

Correct: **Some of** the king's servants **are** here.

Incorrect: **None of** the athlete **were** around.

Correct: **None of** the athletes **was** around.

Incorrect: **Each boy** and each girl **were** given an exercise book.

Correct: **Each boy** and each girl **was** given an exercise book.

If the word **one** is used in a sentence, you should use it throughout.

Incorrect: **Someone** needs to work hard so that **someone** can make ends meet in life.

Correct: **One** needs to work hard so that **one** can make ends meet in life.

Incorrect: **One** must take care of **himself**.

Correct: **One** must take care of **oneself**.

To avoid errors in using pronouns, all transitive verbs such as: **fill**, **enjoy**, **lend**, **give**, etc., must have an expressed subject in a sentence.

Incorrect: Elizabeth asked for her pen but she didn't give her.

Correct: Elizabeth asked for her pen but she didn't give **it** to her.

Incorrect: She drove the car to the gas station but the attendant refused to fill up.

Correct: She drove the car to the gas station but the attendant refused to fill **it** up.

Avoid errors in using an object in place of subject.

Incorrect: In few weeks to come, my friend and **me** will be discussing the investment platform.

Correct: In few weeks to come, my friend and **I** will be discussing the investment platform.

Here are some other common erroneous examples:

Incorrect: It feels good spending time with **they** and their family.

Correct: It feels good spending time with **them** and their family.

Incorrect: Jane announced **she** and **her** son's plans to leave the neighborhood next year.

Correct: Jane announced **her** and **her** son's plans to leave the neighborhood next year.

Incorrect: Both my wife and **myself** felt so embarrassed at the situation we found them in.

Correct: Both my wife and **I** felt so embarrassed at the situation we found them in.

Incorrect: It was **me** who robbed the bank last week.

Correct: It was **I** who robbed the bank week.

Incorrect: Who is there?

It is **me**.

Correct: Who is there?

It is **I**.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

1. Mr. Lin followed \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ son out of the grocery store. (A. him, his B. he, his)

Answer: A

2. Alan then chased \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ daughter out of his house. (A. her, her  
B. she, her C. he, him)

Answer: A

3. He gave \_\_\_ a good handshake after the presentation. (A. he B. his  
C. him)

Answer: C

4. The man confessed it was \_\_\_ who robbed the lady. (A. him B. he  
C. his)

Answer: B

5. I have told \_\_\_ to move out. (A. they B. them)

Answer: B

## Interjections

Though not common in most academic writing, the interjection has its significance in several other forms of writing such as novels, fictional, emails and some other informal communication texts. Interjections are words used to indicate emotions such as surprise, love, hatred, anger, etc., when used in sentences. They may appear either at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence conveying emotion.

The fact about interjections is that, even though they show emotions, *they are not grammatically related to the sentence*. Because interjections are expressed independently, serving an emotive purpose and followed by a sentence, there are usually no associated errors with them. However, interjections must agree with the purpose of sentences they are used for.

Avoid contradiction between your sentence and the interjectory word.

Incorrect: **hooray!** He broke his jaw.

Correct: **What a shame!** He broke his jaw.

Incorrect: **Bravo!** I'm not finished.

Correct: **Alas!** I'm not finished.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate interjections from the statements below:**

\_\_\_\_\_ You completed the task (A. Continue! B. Good work!)[T5]

Answer: B

We made it. \_\_\_\_\_ (A. What a pity! B. Wow!)

Answer: B



## Chapter Two: Grammar components and words

As English language learners, there are basic and complex English grammar errors made when communicating. To joggle your memory a bit, language use refers to your ability to effectively comprehend (when spoken or written to), and produce (communicate) both spoken and written words. So the understanding of how the English language works is confined in thorough appropriation of English grammar rules which the English language lives by. As described in chapter one, there are basic English grammar rules to abide by in order to communicate well. Any attempt to do otherwise would lead to a colossal grammatical error. In the same instance, other complex English grammar components and words also have specific rules to pay due respect to when being used, be it formally or informally. All said, let us go through the components and words.

### Abbreviations

In a short sentence, an abbreviation (abbr.) is a chunk of lengthy phrases or words. As a user of the English language, you can use an abbreviation when you need to reduce a large number of words in a sentence to a single reduced sequence of letters, or to chunk an extensively long sentence into fewer letters to make your statement/sentence more interesting to read. For example, if you have to use North Atlantic Treaty Organization for every place you need to simply use NATO (an abbreviation), you'll realize how boring your writing can be to your audience. A more important fact associated with abbreviations is that they make communication easy for us. In this case, you don't have to write or speak every word for every statement you mean. For example, "I am the CEO/CFO/MD of that company" looks cool right?

To clarify the concept of abbreviation; there are forms of abbreviation which are called **acronym** and **initialism**. An acronym is derived from the initial letters of a long word or phrase. When National Aeronautic Space Administration is reduced to NASA, it's simply an acronym. In an acronym, you do not pronounce the acronym letter for letter; rather, you take it as a single word.

**NB.** Acronyms are pronounced as a word, e.g., NATO (nay tow), NASA (na

sa).

Initialism is another version or form of abbreviation and it is derived when a phrase is reduced to initial letters. In this regard, initialized words are pronounced as individual letters. When you reduce National Football Academy to NFA, initialism is at work. Hence, initialized words are taken letter for letter.

**NB.** Initialisms are pronounced letter for letter, e.g., Personal Computer PC (peecee), NFA (en ef ay) Alternative Dispute Resolution (ay dee ar).

Whether you initialize or use acronym, abbreviating words can be erroneous if you do not acclimatize yourself to them.

Now that you know what abbreviation means and the varieties of abbreviation in English grammar, let's go through common abbreviations and rules that need to be taken care of in order to avoid unnecessary errors.

You can abbreviate a word by omitting one or more syllables.

examination	exam
memorandum	memo
decapitation	decap
recapitulate	recap
advertisement	advert

In the case of names, you can also omit one or more syllables.

Fredrick	Fred
Jackson	Jack
Timothy	Tim
Rajji	Raj

Use cases of common written sentential abbreviations, pay attention to the following:

If in a sentence you mean to say **for example**, simply use **e.g.** E.g. is initialized from the Latin phrase *exempli gratia*, which in English is translated as **for example**.

Also, do not confuse **e.g.** with **i.e.**

So **e.g.** means for example, and it is used for sentence clarification by giving

instances. **I.e.** is from the Latin phrase *id est*, which translates to **that is** or **such that** in English. It is used to give more information or elaborate a sentence. However, these two (i.e., and e.g.) may be used to clarify a sentence, **i.e.**, by explaining the sentence more or by illustration, and **e.g.** explaining by citing examples. Note the following differences:

Drinking and driving is dangerous, **i.e.**, the eyes become blurry, and the cognitive orientation is affected too.

Drinking and driving is dangerous; it can cause a lot of damage, **e.g.**, damage to you and damage to the environment where it happens.

To say **take note**, or when you want to draw readers' attention to an important aspect of your writing, use **P.S.** Although commonly used in corporate organizations in memos and other messages, when used in noncorporate writing, **P.S.**, from the words **post script**, is an effective abbreviation tool for communicating.

Do not confuse the abbreviations for these three words: **they're**, **their**, and **there**.

Many a student makes the error of using **they're** to mean **they are**, in English grammar. While that may look fancy or interesting, it is nonstandard to use. Desist from saying "they're coming;" rather, use "they are coming."

Another error students make is deriving the abbreviation **ther're** from **there are**. Think about this: can "ther're" be substituted for "there are?" the answer is no. It is nonstandard to use it in English grammar. If at all you wish to make an abbreviation from the word "there," a standard acceptable way is to shorten "is."

So instead of having **there is**, you can actually have **there's**.

To avoid abbreviation errors when you are either writing or speaking, *you need to pay attention to the following commonly used abbreviations in English grammar:*

Use **Mr./Mr** and **Mrs./Mrs/Ms.** when you mean **Mister** or **Missus**, respectively.

The idea behind abbreviated Mister/Missus with or without the "dot" connotation is that; "Mr/Mrs" without the dot is acceptable in British English grammar, while Mr./Mrs. Is acceptable in American English grammar.

Abbreviate the word **appointment** as **appt.**, and never mistake it for **apt.**, used for the word **apartment**"

When you see **misc.**, it means **miscellaneous**.

**Tel.** implies **telephone**.

**Est.** implies **established**.

Stop writing **RSVP** squashed together; rather, you separate the letters with a dot such as **R.S.V.P.** The popular initialism R.S.V.P is from the French phrase *Repondez, s'ilvous plait* used in inviting guest to occasions such as birthday parties and it simply to means "please reply or kindly reply" if you'll be present.

When you see **Ave.** certainly, **Avenue** is implied and it is similar to having **Cyn.** as **Canyon**.

Avoid writing **BSC** as the abbreviation for **Bachelor of Science**. This is absolutely wrong. The only appropriate way to go about a standard abbreviation of this is by using **BSc/BS**. Whichever you use here is simply perfect.

**MCQs: Find the appropriate abbreviations for the following:**

1. And so on/and lots more

- A. etc.
- B. id est

Answer: A

2. Take note/please note

- A. e.g.
- B. N.B

Answer: B

3. Abbreviation to mean "namely" is

- A. vice versa

B. viz

Answer: B

4. Page thirteen means

A. P38

B. p.13

Answer: B

5. Compact disc read only memory

A. CD ROM

B. CD-ROM

Answer: B

6. Universal Serial Bus

A. UnSB

B. U.S.B

C. USB

Answer: C

## **Homonyms, Homophones, Homographs and Heteronyms**

The joy of every communicator in the English language lies in getting the right information to the audience with the use of the appropriate words and true intention. To be an effective communicator, you must have a solid command of words to use in various contexts. You must acclimatize yourself with a variety of word meaning, spelling and how they can function effectively in sentences. This idea of knowing the means and spelling of words and what they mean in sentences brings us to the topic of homonyms.

### **Homonyms**

Homonyms refer to those words that are spelled differently but sound similar and have different meanings. Even native English language speakers agree that the English language has a lot of confusing words with similar sound when heard or pronounced. However, it is interesting to know that many of

those words have different spellings. You should avoid the error of confusing words to mean distinctive meanings in your sentences, so pay attention to these grammatical errors that students and writers often make when using homonyms in the English language.

#### Confusion with the use of Loose/Lose

This is one of the most commonly confused homonyms among English speakers. **Loose** simply means not bound together. It can also mean not firm or tightly fitted to something. **Lose**, meanwhile, means to be without, deprived of, or stop having.

Incorrect: I am afraid I might **loose** you.

His pants are **lose**.

Correct: I am afraid I might **lose** you.

His pants are **loose**.

#### Confusion with Their/There

Another mistake common to students lies in this category. It is almost difficult to identify in speech, but the error is always exposed when discovered as written statements.

**Their** is used as a possessive word. It means belonging to someone or to them. On the other hand, **there** is used to mean position, state, etc.

#### Example

Incorrect: The man was killed over **their**.

These are **there** books.

Correct: The man was killed over **there**.

These are **their** books.

#### Confusion with Your/You're

The same error happens as for their/there explained earlier. Just like “their,” **your** is used as a possessive word, while **you're** is simply derived from **you are** (like an abbreviation).

Incorrect: **Your** at the top of **you're** career today because you have worked hard in the past.

**Your** innocent, and I know that.

Correct: **You're** at the top of **your** career today because you have worked hard in the past.

**You're** innocent, and I know that.

*Remember: To know if you are making the right sentences with the words, ensure you cross-check by replacing the words alternatively. To a large extent, by alternating the words, you're good to go. Whether you want to use **their, there, your** or **you're**, an alternation of the polar word (e.g., your for you're) will be good for you to determine which is correct to use.*

### Confusion with Raw/Roar

These two words are very identical in pronunciation just like others. The distinctive difference is that **raw** refers to the unprocessed state of something, i.e., uncooked. It may also mean “not organized or something new.” **Roar** is referred to as a loud noise made by a lion or a machine engine.

Incorrect: The statistical table was made using **roar** data.

The guy could **raw** to make the room shake.

Correct: The statistical table was made using **raw** data.

The guy could **roar** to make the room shake.

### Confusion with Dearth/Death

**Dearth** simply means the scarcity of something. It can also mean insufficient. A dearth of something means that thing is not enough. **Death** is entirely different and it means loss of life.

Incorrect: The prosecutor dropped the charges because there was a death of evidence.

He was put to **dearth** by hanging.

Correct: The prosecutor dropped the charges because there was a dearth of evidence.

He was put to **death** by hanging.

## Confusion with Bare/Bear

**Bare** simply means without something appropriate. “I killed the lion with my **bare** hands” means: *killed the lion without using anything like a gun or other objects.*

Bear can mean an animal. It can also mean to “carry something” or “tolerate something or someone.” Its past tense is **bore**. The food in the barn belongs to the “bear” (talking about the animal). “He asked her to bear with him” (meaning tolerate).

Incorrect: The man can walk on hot coals **bear**foot.  
It’s really hard to **bare** the burden of four kids alone.

Correct: The man can walk on hot coals **bare**foot.  
It’s really hard to **bear** the burden of raising four kids alone.

## The confusion with Dare/Dear

**Dear** is used regarding affection or to mean intimacy. In contrast, **dare** can be used in the form of a challenge.

Incorrect: My ex-boyfriend was so **dare** to me that I felt disappointed when he cheated on me.  
He **deared** me to slap the soldier’s face, and I did it gladly.

Correct: My ex-boyfriend was so **dear** to me that I felt disappointed when he cheated on me.  
He **dared** me to slap the soldier’s face, and I did it gladly.

## Avoid the error of One’s/Once

**One’s** and **Once** are similarly interesting words among users in this present age, and a lot of writers find it difficult to use them appropriately because of lack of knowledge to distinguish between the two.

By simple analogy, **one’s** is used as a possessive word. Just like you say the book is “his,” “one’s” can also be used in the same context. Further, when you use **one’s** in a sentence, you are using it in a non-directional manner. For example, you can say, “It’s good to take care of one’s health,” instead of saying “It is good to take care of your health.” In this way, you are saying



people or humans should take care of their health, not necessarily referring to a specific individual.

**Once** is another case word and it means “a single time,” “on a one-time occasion” or “formerly.” When you are using this word as compared to its counterpart, you are mentioning a single event of occurrence or a former event that had occurred.

Incorrect: He was **one’s** an elementary school teacher before he realized politics was his true dream.

The apartment mates saw each other **one’s** every three months, yet they quarreled like cat and mouse.

It is more important to pursue **once** dream in life, lest one end up unsatisfied.

I believe **once** family is more important than the billions of dollars to be made from business trips.

Correct: He was **once** an elementary school teacher before he realized politics was his true dream.

The apartment mates saw each other **once** every three months, yet they quarreled like cat and mouse.

It is important that one pursue **one’s** dream in life, lest one end up unsatisfied.

I believe **one’s** family is more important than the billions of dollars to be made from business trips.

Avoid the error of Too/Two

This basically is an example of homophone. As a learner, it is useful to get used to word inflections such as knowing that the word **too** is used in a sentence to emphasize a point. It can also be used instead of words like “very” and “also.” For example: “We walked too/very slowly and missed the bus.” Another case would be to say, “I’d like to shake hands with the governor too/also.”

The word **two** is separate. Two is a number or a figure expressed in words. You should never substitute “too” for “two” in a sentence.

Incorrect: Mark my words, the **too** men are to blame if he doesn't come.  
It is uncertain if I'll want to go **two**.

Correct: Mark my words; the **two** men are to blame if he doesn't come.  
It is uncertain if I'll want to go **too**.

### Confusion with Through/Threw

This can be confusing at times if you don't know which word is appropriate for a particular sentence. Actually, where confusion lies in these two words is in the "-th" pronunciation, and this shouldn't be a problem anymore once you can familiarize yourself with the words right here and now.

Incorrect: The dog went **threw** the doorway and attacked the old man.  
He couldn't bear the pain any longer, so he **through** the Infinity Stone away.  
I thank God for all he has seen me **threw**.

Correct: The dog went **through** the doorway and attacked the old man.  
He couldn't bear the pain any longer, so he **threw** the Infinity Stone away.  
I thank God for all he has seen me **through**.

### Avoid errors in using Waist/Waste

**Waist** is simply located below your ribs, and **waste** means to be extravagant, or squander something whether you are accountable for it or not.

Incorrect: He didn't know swinging with the **waste** was a bad idea for male participants in the competition.  
It was futile chasing the thief since we knew we would **waist** our bullets.

Correct: He didn't know swinging with the **waist** was a bad idea for male participants in the competition.  
It was futile chasing the thief since we knew we would **waste** our bullets.

### Avoid the error of Toe/Tow

The **toe** is a member of your foot, and **tow** is to use a vehicle, helicopter, or boat to pull another boat, or vehicle or helicopter along.

Incorrect: There is a perfect way to **toe** your vehicle, in case you didn't know.

Dermatologists often say you should care for your **townails** nearly as much as you care for your face.

Correct: There is a perfect way to **tow** your vehicle, in case you didn't know.

Dermatologists often say you should care for your **toenails** nearly as much as you care for your face.

### The confusion of Tail/Tale

**Tail** is usually a word related to animals or coins, and the word **tale** is a story that is imagined or true.

Incorrect: When you flip a coin, you'll get either heads or **tales**.

Have you read the book called *The **Tail** of Lady Bug?*

Correct: When you flip a coin, you'll get either heads or **tails**.

Have you read the book called *The **Tale** of Lady Bug?*

### Avoid the mistakes of Red/Read

The word **read** retains its spelling in present tense and past tense. But **red** is primarily a color, and it may connote danger. In this case, the past tense of read is compared to red because of the pronunciation.

Incorrect: On Tuesday afternoon, an accident occurred because it was difficult to detect if the **read** light was damaged or working.

Daniel **red** the inscription aloud.

Correct: On Tuesday afternoon, an accident occurred because it was difficult to detect if the **red** light was damaged or working.

Daniel **read** the inscription aloud. (past tense)

**MCQs: Find the appropriate answer to the following questions:**

1. You \_\_\_\_ should come along.

- A. too/two
- B. too/many
- C. two/much

Answer: A

2. I told him to \_\_\_\_\_ me a letter.

- A. write
- B. right
- C. wright

Answer: A

3. I love to \_\_\_\_\_ him speak.

- A. hear
- B. here

Answer: A

4. Villagers declared war on the \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. which
- B. witch

Answer: B

5. That is the \_\_\_\_\_ we use in making bread.

- A. flour
- B. flower

Answer: A

**Homographs**

Among the varieties of homonyms is the homograph. By definition, homographs are words with the same spelling but have different meaning. Homographic words are mostly not pronounced the same way. Pay rapt attention to the following words and study their other meanings extensively. By doing that, you will be able to appropriate the “right” not “write” usage of these words when you intend to use them again.

### *Tear /Tear*

The word **tear** can mean water droplets from the eyes when crying. It can also mean to rip a piece of paper into pieces. However, how the word is used in sentences and the appropriateness of the word in sentences is important for learners to know. You know which “tear” to refer to when writing sentences. You should also remember that “tear” meaning water drops from the eye when crying is a noun, while the second “tear” meaning ripping paper into pieces is used as a verb. So, when they are used, you’ve got to be careful how noun words and verb words are put to use.

Examples: 1. He keeps shedding **tears** because his heart is broken.  
2. I’ll watch on YouTube how to **tear** the robot apart without damaging its engine.

### *Bow/Bow*

When you hear, “Give me the bow” or “Give a tai chi bow to the master,” what comes to your mind? The first statement is meaningful based on the fact that “Give me the bow” sounds like you are being told to hand over an object: **bow**, a weapon for shooting an arrow. The second statement, “Give a tai chi bow to the master,” is also meaningful in the context that you are to demonstrate something: **bow meaning** bend forward at the waist to show respect to the master. Either way, messages are being sent. This requires the noun and verb practice as well as how they are pronounced, which shows in the noun and verb forms as well.

Examples: 1. The three Hebrew men refused to **bow** to the gods of the land (verb – action).  
2. The archery company that specializes in making **bows** is in Los Angeles (noun – bow as something made).

### *Capital/Capital*

This homographic word should not scare you as a learner who's ready to gain knowledge in English grammar skills. One, **capital** can be a federal city. Two, **capital** can be used as a legal term to mean punishment. In these cases, the word is serving the noun function which may be confusing to you, but you have to understand the context of the word usage.

Illustrations:

1. His crime was so great that his retribution was **capital**. NB: retribution means punishment for a criminal act, and the word "capital" there means "punishment by death."
2. Death by lethal injection should be the **capital** punishment for rape around the globe.
3. Did you know Atlanta is the **capital** of Georgia?
4. I doubt Mexico is the **capital** of all drug cartels in the world.

*Paste/Paste*

Paste is a mixture of content or a processed content, e.g., tomato paste. In contrast, paste can mean to stick an object on another.

Examples:

1. Kindly pass me the **paste** to add to the sauce.
2. Melissa was bitter because the art design she **pasted** on the school board was removed by an arrogant classmate or hers.

*Lead/Lead*

**Lead** is a metallic material and also can mean to show someone a destination. However, the past tense of lead is **led**. Therefore, do not make the mistake of misrepresentation when using the word "lead" in sentences.

Examples:

1. The engineer could not use the **lead** due to the fault detected when he test-ran it.
2. He asked if the idea would not **lead** them into temptation.

### *Rose/Rose*

Rose can either be the name of a person, color, or the name of type of flower. Also, it can serve as the past tense of rise.

Examples:

1. He **rose** in the morning and began to shout as he jumped and smiled.
2. Every name does not appeal to me, but when I hear **Rose**, my soul is lifted.

### *Canvass/Canvas*

Let's get a mix of art terminology and regular English grammar using canvass and canvas. These can be very confusing as homographic words in English grammar. Simply put, **canvass** is verb, and it means to seek support or help or agreement on something. **Canvas** on the other hand, is a kind of cotton or linen clothing material.

Examples:

1. This is what most politicians do when it's time to campaign; they **canvass** for support.
2. Most artworks I love most are made on **canvas**.

**MCQs: Find the appropriate answer for the following:**

1. Votes are gotten based on how you can \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. canvas
  - B. canvass
  - C. converse [\[T6\]](#)

Answer: B

2. It is hard to determine if the price of goods is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. fare
  - B. fair

C. fear

Answer: B

3. Can you please tell the names of the \_\_\_\_\_ coming through the door?

A. pear

B. pair

C. pare

Answer: B

4. We are not sure he will \_\_\_\_\_ them there.

A. leed

B. lead

C. led

Answer: B

5. it is difficult for saints to \_\_\_\_\_.

A. lye

B. lie

Answer: B



## Chapter 3: Punctuation Marks

Among common grammatical errors in the English language, punctuation errors are the most common. If you are not a good reader, you might not be able to detect the blunders. Punctuation implies using spacing, signs, and some other symbols with the intention of making readers understand either spoken or written texts. When you communicate, punctuation marks enable you to appear like an expert. Whether you are speaking or writing, there is always a need to punctuate. In fact, English grammar isn't complete without punctuation marks. Let's look at some simple illustrations:

1. Since the launch of Ruger 57 other critical reviews have it that Ruger 57 Company has not only fulfilled its mission but has also overtaken its competitors in the handguns market thanks to its outstanding innovation and development invested.
2. "Since the launch of Ruger 57, other critical reviews have it that Ruger 57 Company has not only fulfilled its mission, but has also overtaken its competitors in the handguns market – thanks to its outstanding innovation and development invested."
3. "In the beginning was the word the word was with God and the word was God."
4. "In the beginning was the word; the word was with God, and the word was God."

If you are not a good reader, you might not be able to make sense of what is written in the first and third paragraphs. And now, when you read the second and fourth paragraphs, you'd realize that you could decipher the paragraphs easily and make sense of what is written. Your ability to do this is credited to punctuation at work in the paragraphs.

Another fact about punctuation is that it helps you to make diverse meanings from a sentence. A popular example will give you a clear meaning here:

### **A plain text without punctuation**

Given the statement, "Woman without her man is nothing," this appears ambiguous, right? Let's look at the punctuated texts below:

"Woman without her man, is nothing." (meaning that men are important to

women)

“Woman, without her, man is nothing.”(meaning that women are important to men)

The above mentioned illustration simply helps to know that punctuation can help to differentiate meanings from words joined together to make sentences. Without punctuation, you won't know exactly what the statement is talking about.

All told, there are several punctuation marks commonly used in English grammar. The commonly used ones are explained in this chapter.

- a. Period (also known as a full stop)
- b. Semicolon
- c. Colon
- d. Dash
- e. Hyphen
- f. Exclamation marks
- g. Quotation marks
- h. Apostrophe
- i. Ellipsis
- j. Comma
- k. Question mark

Simply following the correct and appropriate use of these punctuation marks will enable you to make good sentences and communicate effectively when writing.

### **Period (.)**

A period can also be called a “full stop.” After you are done writing a complete statement or sentence, it should end with a period. Also, period one of the three punctuation marks used in ending sentences. An important thing you should know about the period is that irrespective of the number of abbreviations used in a sentence, a period must always come last, being the final stop. There are a few rules to follow so as to avoid errors when using a period.

Do not add another period to a sentence which already ends with a period.



## **Exclamation (!)**

This is mostly used in storybooks, novels and other literary texts. It's rare to find exclamation marks in formal texts, publications, reports and some others. However, *exclamation marks are part of the verbal statements we make daily*. When you, out of surprise, say "Wow," what you have done simply shows an exclamation (i.e., how surprised or flabbergasted you are). So, by definition, exclamation marks are used to indicate surprise and emphasis in sentences. Also, Exclamations points are those marks that conclude interjectory words in English grammar. Check out the illustrations below:

I am so disappointed in your attitude!  
Yeah, we won!  
You went? Wow!  
I am simply the best!  
I repeat; it's my time to reign!

**Never use exclamation marks in formal writing. Don't forget this have been mentioned earlier; exclamation marks mostly appear in informal or conversational writing.**

## **Ellipsis (...)**

The ellipsis is used by prolific English language writers. It is a special kind of punctuation because of the beauty it adds to sentences and paragraphs as a whole. If you desire to omit a word, short paragraph, phrase or line of statement from a passage, ellipsis is the right punctuation mark for such purpose. Another interesting fact about ellipses is that they make your readers inquisitive toward your paragraph. Readers become more interested in finding out more about the omitted part of the sentence or paragraph you are talking about.

Popularly, the ellipsis uses just three dots (three periods). Although, some other scholarly books may use more than three dots, the most appropriate number of dots applied in creating an ellipsis is three. Take note of the errors to avoid when using the ellipsis in the below illustrations:

If you are omitting sentences or words in the middle of, or between sentences, use an ellipsis.

Full statement:

**"I am a man of virtue leaving no stone unturned, lest I lose my heritage."**

Ellipsis rewritten:

**“I am a man of virtue leaving no stone unturned...”**

When applying the appropriate ellipsis, you should leave out punctuation marks like commas.

Let’s evaluate this rule using the excerpt from Abraham Lincoln’s address to the Americans during the period of mass protests and upheaval of racism and discrimination in America.

The full text says,

**“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”**

Ellipsis rewritten:

**“...our fathers brought forth...a new nation...dedicated to the proposition...”**

## **Comma (,)**

A comma is simply a pause in a sentence. It is also used to join words or sentences together. You should also know that a comma can sometimes serve the function of the conjunction “and” in a sentence. Many ways to avoid comma errors will be shown you as you read further. Also, the use cases to perfectly punctuate your writing with the comma will be explained and detailed as you read on.

Ensure to use commas to make your statement clearer.

Perhaps you have groups and different categories of words; use commas for separation in order to avoid confusing the readers.

Incorrect: The money was shared among his wife mother children company staff and other relatives.

Correct: The money was shared among his wife, mother, children, company staff, and other relatives.

Simply use a comma instead of the conjunction “and” between **two** adjectives.

Using “and” isn’t a bad idea, but applying a comma makes your writing eloquent and intelligent.

Incorrect: On my way to the grocery store yesterday, I met a **tattered** and **grievous** man.

Julius Caesar was a **mighty** and **influential** man in his time.

Correct: On my way to the grocery store yesterday, I met **a tattered, grievous** man.

Julius Caesar was a **mighty, influential** man in his time.

If you have the name or title of a person in a sentence, use commas before and after the name or title.

Incorrect: Do you Dan think he will come?

Will he the CEO appear in court tomorrow?

Would you pass me the salt? Yes Uncle, I will.

Correct: Do you, Dan, think he will come?

Will he, the CEO, appear in court tomorrow?

Would you pass me the salt? Yes, Uncle, I will.

Looking at the sentences above, you’ll discover that the comma in “do you, Dan...” helps to make a clear, direct question to Dan specifically, if “he thinks he will come.” Likewise the second statement, “Will he, the CEO...” helps to let the listener know that the person to “appear in court tomorrow,” is the CEO.

Avoid making comma errors when separating the calendar days, months and years, and location.

Incorrect: My girlfriend and I met on July 15 1980 at the train station.

My mom and I are going to have our vacation on May 15th 2020 in Dubai UAE.

Correct: My girlfriend and I met on July 15, 1980, at the train station.

My mom and I are going to have our vacation on May 15th, 2020, in Dubai, U.A.E.

Avoid using a comma if you are omitting any part of the date in a sentence.

Incorrect: My grandpa died in October, last year.

They should travel in November, 2020.

Correct: My grandpa died in October last year.

They should travel in November 2020.

If you have compound sentences, use commas to separate each sentence to have a clearer meaning.

Incorrect: Although he was not in class he did his best in the classwork.

He was even though you didn't notice the best candidate for the job.

Correct: Although he was not in class, he did his best in the classwork.

He was, even though you didn't notice, the best candidate for the job.

Use a comma when you have two or more independent clauses.

Incorrect: He quarreled with his wife before leaving home drove to his friend's house and went to the club.

Correct: He quarreled with his wife before leaving home, drove to his friend's house, and went to the club.

Avoid using a comma when you have "and" conjoining only two words or entities.

Incorrect: You may share the fruits between her, and him.

Correct: You may share the fruits between her and him.

The only situation you may use a comma before "and" is in a compound

independent sentence of at least three clauses.

Incorrect: Barrister Mike was a great man he was a magician a father of three kids and was loved by many.

Correct: Barrister Mike was a great man, he was a magician, a father of three kids, **and** was loved by many.

Use a comma when giving more details about someone or something. Please pay attention to the errors students make, and learn the appropriate way in the sentences below.

Incorrect: John the beloved who followed his master everywhere is in our midst.

Mr. James the ruthless soldier was assassinated during the coup d'état.

Apostle Paul who persecuted the Christians eventually became a hardened preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Correct: John, the beloved, who followed his master everywhere, is in our midst.

Mr. James, the ruthless soldier, was assassinated during the coup d'état.

Apostle Paul, who persecuted the Christians, eventually became a hardened preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Apply a comma to separate a question from a statement referring to the same thing. Many students often commit this error as well. Rather than including a comma, they use a period instead, and that is erroneous.

Incorrect: He couldn't go. Could he?

I can eat my cake now. Can I?

You can't eat your cake and have it at the same time. Can you?

Correct: He couldn't go, could he?

I can eat my cake now, can I?



You can't eat your cake and have it at the same time, can you?

Use a comma immediately after words such as **therefore, so, however, moreover, hence, thereafter**, etc. when used in sentences.

Incorrect: I will not pursue him for the money, moreover I still have his car with me.

He observed for several hours and thereafter began to dance.

She'd been smiling at me for about forty-five minutes; so I approached her to know if we had met before.

Correct: I will not pursue him for the money; moreover, I still have his car with me.

He observed for several hours, and thereafter, began to dance.

She'd been smiling at me for about forty-five minutes; so, I approached her to know if we had met before.

## **Colon (:)**

The colon is another kind of punctuation mark that many learners and writers leave out when writing in the English language. It is not so uncommon that some articles have elements of punctuation marks like the colon, and that is why you need to learn how it functions and also learn the errors to avoid when using colons in sentences. Technically, the colon is used to explain or give a list in the same way that "e.g.," "i.e.," and namely are used in sentences. So, pay attention to the illustrations in the rules below.

For official letter writing, *use a colon following the salutation even if you are addressing the letter to the person by their first name*. This is in contrast to writing an informal letter where a comma is used because the person being addressed is familiar. Although many writers are often confused about making distinctions between using a colon or a comma, that doesn't mean it is appropriate to keep the confusion going. Now that you are informed about the differences, ensure you make use of it.

For example: Dear Mr. Matthew:

Distinguished Senator:

Dear Ms. Melissa:

In the absence of introductory words like “for example,” and so on, use colon.

Correct: Three things can make a man happy: good job, good wife, and amazing children.

We need a candidate with the qualities of: knowledge of Microsoft Office Access, programming software, and critical reasoning skills.

Do not use a colon if it does not follow a complete statement.

For example:

Incorrect: If you want your readers to understand your content, and ensure your supervisor awards you a good grade, you should : (1) write legibly, (2) support your points with facts, and (3) cite relevant examples.

Correct: If you want your readers to understand your content, and ensure your supervisor awards you a good grade, you should (1) write legibly, (2) support your points with facts, and (3) cite relevant examples.

You can use a colon to replace a semicolon when you have two clauses with one clause explaining the other without the use of the conjunction “and.”

I love vacations: traveling to Paris in France is my favorite.

In a sentence, *if just a clause follows the colon, do not capitalize the first letter immediately after the colon.* But if there are more than two sentences still explaining the same point and not joined with a conjunction, you should capitalize the first letter immediately after the colon and also capitalize the sentence next. Check the examples below;

He just realized after a decade, how bad he is at mathematics: **he** doesn't know what one plus one is equal to.

He just realized after a decade, how bad his spoken English had been: **He** doesn't understand why “give him him book” is wrong and “give her her book” is right. **He** also doesn't know the rules

guiding the use of a period in English grammar.

## **Semicolon (;)**

It is similar in usage to the colon to a large extent, but the use cases of the semicolon are limited. Read on to learn the errors.

Use the semicolon before words like **for example**, **therefore**, **i.e.**, and **however**, when they are about to make a complete statement.

I am sure the newly passed economic bill will favor us; **for example**, allowing foreign investors, releasing bonds to citizens in diaspora, investing in infrastructure and encouraging exportation of local products will return our economy back to the seat of glory.

I have told you before; **i.e.**, drinking and driving will truncate his life.

Where you do not have conjunction words such as “and,” a semicolon is good to apply.

Incorrect: Let’s meet at the bar I have good news for you.

Can you come to my office I have a job for you.

Correct: Let’s meet at the bar; I have good news for you.

Can you come to my office; I have a job for you.

## **Quotation Marks (“”)**

To write intelligently in the English language, the quotation mark is a member of a punctuation marks category you cannot do without. Whether you are writing formally or informally, you must use quotation marks in a sentence, word or phrase. When you put quotation marks around a word, phrase or clause, or in a sentence, these instances become “quoted.” What are the rules to follow in avoiding quotation marks errors in English grammar? Read on!

*If you need to quote a question statement, ensure to put quotation marks after the question mark.* Quotation marks, when they are needed, always carry the larger power above other punctuation in a sentence.

Incorrect: “After doing that, what next”? He asked.

He said to her, “Do you think we can have a kiss”?

She said, “He said, are you finished with the homework”?

Correct: “After doing that, what next?” he asked.

He said to her, “Do you think we can have a kiss after the class?”

She said, “He said, are you finished with the homework?”

Punctuation marks like the comma, ellipsis, and period used in sentences remain inside the quotation marks. Irrespective of the number of other kinds of punctuation marks in a sentence, once you need to quote, you must quote the whole sentence.

Incorrect: “A real soldier, who is not afraid of death, should be loyal, and fight for his country”...

“I am going to be the best version of myself; a man of virtue, optimistic, careful and always looking to make use of every opportunity even when everything appears difficult.”

Melissa said, “James said, ‘Put my phone on silence’”.

Correct: “A real soldier, who is not afraid of death, should be loyal, and fight for his country...”

“I am going to be the best version of myself; a man of virtue, optimistic, careful and always looking to make use of every opportunity even when everything appears difficult.”

Melissa said, “James said, ‘Put my phone on silence.’”

## **Apostrophe (’)**

*For possessive words, use an apostrophe.*

Look at Abraham’s curvy head.

That is the man’s son.

Behind John is Dave’s belt.

That backpack is his sister’s, not his.

For names ending with “-s,” use an apostrophe to show possession.

Incorrect: In Jesus' name we pray.

Those materials are Mr. Rawlings'.

Lees's car is the best I've ever seen in my entire life.

Twenty miles from here, is my brother-in-laws' apartment.

Correct: In Jesus's name we pray.

Those materials are Mr. Rawlings's.

Lee's car is the best I've ever seen in my entire life.

Twenty miles from here, is my brother-in-law's apartment.

For word contraction, use an apostrophe where the letter omitted is removed:

	you are	you're
I am	I'm	
they are	they're	
he is	he's	
where is	where's	
that is	that's	
it is	it's	

When using an apostrophe for plural nouns to show possession, ensure the noun is pluralized first, then add the apostrophe.

Incorrect: We are in the mens' world.

There is the womens' locker.

The actresses's costume is here.

That is the Jones's residence.

Correct: We are in the men's world.

There is the women's locker.

The actresses' costume is here.

That is the Jones' residence.

Avoid forming plurals for numbers and capital letters by using an apostrophe.

Incorrect: I was born in the **90's**.

She got married in the **1880's**.

She's a good learner as she has learned the **ABC's** of common errors in English grammar.

Correct: I was born in the **90s**.

She got married in the **1880s**.

She's a good learner as she has learned the **ABCs** of common errors in English grammar.

Avoid using an apostrophe with possessive words like **his, hers, theirs**, etc.

Incorrect: Although he believed the grade was **his's**, she had always known it's **hers's**.

The idea behind the innovation was **theirs's**.

Those cupcakes belong to my brother, not **your's**.

Correct: Although he believed the grade was **his**, she had always known it's **hers**.

The idea behind the innovation was **theirs**.

Those cupcakes belong to my brother, not **yours**.

## **Hyphens (-)**

Hyphens are used to showcase compound words. These compound words may come as two, three, or four words to refer to a single thing. Before studying the rules attached to learning how the hyphen is used, look at the examples below:

Eye-opening (meaning that an unexpected revelation is being revealed)

Mother-in-law (the mother of your wife)

Door-in-the-face (using a big request as a means to get other smaller requests)

Foot-in-the-door (the opposite of the Door-in-the-face)

Now, let's check out the rules you must not break in using hyphenation.

The first rule in hyphenation is: *before you think of hyphenating two unfamiliar words, make sure you check them in your dictionary.* This will enable you to be sure that you are not making a mistake. Most times, the major mistakes students make is that they use unfamiliar words and hyphenate them before taking time to find out. For example, “eyewitness” must never be hyphenated, but “eye-opener” exists in the dictionary hyphenated, and not joined together. This makes the rule valid that your dictionary must be your closest pal if you desire to be excellent at hyphenating words.

Use hyphens when you have two or more adjectival words appearing before a noun and serving as a single meaning.

Before she met me, little did she know that I was such a **handsome-looking** man.

It was a **record-breaking** experience in my family to be the first to meet the president.

Hyphenate when you have adverbs used as compound sentences in front of a noun.

Incorrect: A **well known** record about the indicted artist was banned last week.

The **long awaited** engagement took place last week.

Correct: A **well-known** record about the indicted artist was banned last week.

The **long-awaited** engagement took place last week.

Ensure you hyphenate words that state fractions of numbers and compound numbers like twenty-one and so on.

Incorrect: To bake a cake, you need **one fifth** of a tin of milk.

I will be **twenty four** on July fourth.

Correct: To bake a cake, you need **one-fifth** of a tin of milk.

I will be twenty-four on July fourth.

## **Dash (–)**

Dashes are interesting and rare punctuation marks in English grammar. The difference between a dash and hyphen is in the “length.” A dash is typically longer than hyphen. And another outstanding difference is that, while a hyphen helps separate compound words, a dash is mostly used to complement an already existing sentence with another related sentence.

For example, *using a dash for open compound words*, you can have, “a primary school – secondary debate competition.”

You can use a dash to state the time frame of an event, e.g., “The historic incident occurred during the years 1990 – 2030.”

Also, use a dash to elaborate more on your sentence only in a conversational style of writing, e.g., “The Ruger 57 pistol has the fantastic features of the 5.7 round such as flat shooting and soft clicking – enabling you to shoot multiple rounds at targeted positions.”

**Remember; consistency is the key to remembering the rules and how to avoid errors in punctuation marks. Keep studying and practicing – that’s the path to expertise.**

## **General MCQs on Punctuation marks — Find the appropriate answer to the following:**

1. She’s at the \_\_\_ office.

A. M.D.’s

B. M.D.s

Answer: A

2. How many dots should a standard ellipsis have?



- A. 2
- B. 3
- C. 4

Answer: B

3. I love my \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. wife daughter and son
- B. wife, daughter, and son
- C. wife, daughter and son

Answer: B

4. Will you kiss the bride?\_\_

- A. Yes pastor I will.
- B. Yes, Pastor, I will.
- C. Yes, Pastor I will.

Answer: B

5. They met on the 3rd of \_\_\_\_\_ 2019.

- A. May
- B. May,
- C. ,May

Answer: B

6. He needed to travel \_\_\_\_ he phoned his wife.

- A. ,so,
- B. so,
- C. so

Answer: A

7. I wish to speak with you( ) can we talk later?

- A. :

- B. ;
- C. ,

Answer: B

8. Come with the following materials( ) glue, crayons, and pencils.

- A. :
- B. ;
- C. ,

Answer: A

9. \_\_\_\_\_ he asked.

- A. “How do I go about this”?
- B. “How do I go about this?”
- C. How do I go about this?”

Answer: B

10. She shouted, \_\_\_\_\_

- A. “Get away from me.”
- B. “Get away from me”.

Answer: A

11. I really don't know \_\_\_\_\_ heart I might have broken in the past year.

- A. whose
- B. who's
- C. what's

Answer: A

12. \_\_\_\_\_ at the door?

- A. Whose
- B. Whos

C. Who's

Answer: C

13. Do you know if the company is \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?

- A. task oriented, employee oriented
- B. task-oriented, employee-oriented
- C. task – oriented, employee – oriented

Answer: B

14. We need to have a \_\_\_\_\_ association this session.

- A. parent-teacher
- B. parent – teacher
- C. parent teacher

Answer: B

## Chapter 4: Sentence Structure and Composition

A sentence is a statement that makes a complete thought. Sentence structure is composed of many parts with the subject and predicate being the foundation of every sentence structure. In this chapter, we will explore errors that can arise from the wrong usage of various parts of a sentence.

### Present Tense

A present tense describes an event that is currently taking place or a state of being. For example, “I am glad” is a present tense. Present tenses are considered to be easy to master. However, people still make mistakes despite their simplicity. Here are some common mistakes that are often made with the use of present tense:

Don’t forget to add “s” to the end of the third-person singular in the present sample.

Incorrect: Kid’s health **depend** on eating enough vegetables.

Correct: Kids’ health **depends** on eating enough vegetables.

Don’t use the present simple instead of present continuous for actions that are happening at the moment.

Incorrect: He **walks** so slowly.

Correct: He is **walking** so slowly.

Don’t use **will** instead of the present simple to express a future action after words such as **whether, if, as soon as, and before**.

Incorrect: If the weather **will be** bad, we will not go to the mall.

Correct: If the weather **is** bad, we will not go to the mall.

Don’t use the present continuous instead of present simple when talking about well-known facts.

Incorrect: The earth **is revolving** around the sun.

Correct: The earth **revolves** around the sun.

Don’t use the present continuous after words that express emotions.

Incorrect: Father **is loving** you to the moon and back.

Correct: Father **loves** you to the moon and back.

Use the present perfect when talking about something that was not completed until the moment of speaking.

Incorrect: I **am waiting** for you since 7 o'clock.

Correct: I **have been waiting** for you since 7 o'clock.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Whatever \_\_\_\_\_ up comes down. (A. is going B. goes)

Answer: B

He \_\_\_\_ vibrantly and passionately. (A. speak B. speaks)

Answer: B

## **Past Tense**

The past tense shows that an action occurred in the past. An example of the past tense is, "I ate rice last week." Below are common errors in the use of the past tense and how to use them appropriately:

Do not use the past continuous, but past simple to talk about past habits.

Incorrect: I **was walking** to church every day when I was young.

Correct: I **walked** to church every day when I was young.

Don't use the continuous to emphasize completed events at a particular time in the past, but past simple.

Incorrect: I **was calling** his office at 5 o'clock yesterday evening.

Correct: I **called** his office at 5 o'clock yesterday evening.

Do not use present perfect or past perfect, but past simple when referring to a definite time in the past.

Incorrect: I **have woken up** at 6 o'clock this morning.

Correct: I **woke up** at 6 o'clock this morning.

Don't use the past simple, but present perfect to refer to time up to now.

Incorrect: I **didn't pay** my electricity bill yet.

Correct: I **haven't paid** my electricity bill yet.

Don't use the past continuous, but the past simple to repeat main events.

Incorrect: She **was cycling** to Ben's house last night.

Correct: She **cycled** to Ben's house last night.

Don't use the past continuous in the same way as "used to" when talking about things that used to happen but are no longer true.

Incorrect: We **were** playing games in the park in the summer.

Correct: We **used to** play games in the park in the summer.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Ben \_\_\_\_\_ swept the room yet. (A. didn't B. hasn't)

Answer: B

David \_\_\_\_\_ to the governor's house yesterday. (A. walked B. was walking)

Answer: A

## **Future Tense**

The future tense in grammar reflects that the event described by the verb will happen in the future. Future tense can be in the form of simple future tense, future continuous tense, future perfect tense, or future perfect continuous tense.

Example:

I will pay you a visit as soon as possible.

The most common future tense mistakes are depicted and corrected below:

Don't miss out on **is**, **am**, or **are** when using the "going to" form.

Incorrect: I **going to** wash the clothes tomorrow.

Correct: I **am going to** wash the clothes tomorrow.

Don't miss out on **to** when you are using the "going to" form.

Incorrect: He is **going** eat that fruit again.

Correct: He is **going to** eat that fruit again.

Don't add **to** when using "will."

Incorrect: She **will to** be sorry.

Correct: She **will** be sorry.

Don't use the "-ing" form of the verb instead of the base form with "will" or "going to."

Incorrect: She **will winning** the match.

Incorrect: She is **going to winning** the match.

Correct: She **will win** the match.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

He \_\_\_\_\_ angry. (A. will be B. will to be)

Answer: A

She is \_\_\_\_ dance again. (A. going B. going to)

Answer: B

## **First Person**

By taking note of the pronouns in a sentence, you will be able to know whether it's the first, second, or third grammatical person. Pronouns such as **I** and **my** show that an individual is writing in first person. First-person pronouns can also be in plural forms such as **we**, **our**, and **us**.

Examples:

**I** am not oblivious to that fact.

**We** can stay at home if you allow **us** to.

It can be tricky to write in first person as it can be easy to make mistakes. Below are common mistakes associated with writing in first person:

Don't end a sentence with "I."

Incorrect: Jackson talked with **I**.

Correct: Jackson talked with **me**.

Don't start a sentence with "me."

Incorrect: **Me** and Ben went to the market yesterday.

Correct: Ben and **I** went to the market yesterday.

Don't say, "between you and I," say, "between you and me."

Incorrect: Let's keep this **between you and I**.

Correct: Let's keep this **between you and me**.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

David and \_\_\_\_\_ will be coming to your house. (A. I B. me)

Answer: A

The feud between you and \_\_\_\_\_ will never end. (A. I B. me)

Answer: B

## **Second Person**

Just like their first-person counterparts, it can be tricky to use second-person pronouns. The second person refers to the audience of the speaker. Pronouns such as **you** and **your** depict the second person. It is the context of the statement that decides whether it is a singular or plural form of the second person that is being used.

Examples:

**You** have to be careful.

**Your** dog is cute.

Here are some common errors people make when speaking or writing second-person pronouns:

Avoid shifting from second person to first or third person in a sentence.

Incorrect: We wanted to learn swimming from a coach but we found out that **you** can learn online.

Correct: We wanted to learn swimming from a coach but we found out that **we** can learn online.

Incorrect: If you are focused, **most people** will be able to achieve **their** dreams.

Correct: If you are focused, **you** will be able to achieve **your** dreams.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

If most people eat healthily, \_\_\_\_\_ will live longer. (A. I B. they)



Answer: B

We will work hard because that is how \_\_\_\_\_ can become wealthy. (A. we B. you)

Answer: A

### **Third Person**

Third person is a form of pronoun or verb which reflects that you are talking about someone or something other than yourself or your direct audience. It distances the writer or speaker from the character it presents in a sentence.

Examples:

**He** is an exemplary leader.

**They** have a knack for producing good music.

Students and speakers of the English language are susceptible to using the third person in the wrong way. Below are some common errors and the appropriate usage:

Ensure you add “s” to the verb form when writing about the habit of a singular subject.

Incorrect: He **become** annoyed when told to keep quiet.

Correct: He **becomes** annoyed when told to keep quiet.

Don’t add “s” to the verb form when writing about the habit of plural subjects.

Incorrect: They **becomes** sad when told to keep quiet.

Correct: They **become** sad when told to keep quiet.

Third-person plural should take singular verb forms and vice versa.

Incorrect: She **have** a car.

Correct: She **has** a car.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Superman \_\_\_\_\_ his energy from the sun. (A. derives B. derive)

Answer: A

Ben and John \_\_\_\_ the license to roam freely in this compound. (A. has B. have)

Answer: B

## Subject

In English Grammar, the subject refers to the part of a sentence that indicates what or who performed or performs an action. The subject is usually a noun. However, there are also subject pronouns. In declarative statements, subjects usually come after the verb.

Examples:

**The lion** roars.

**My sister's bag** looks nice.

Typical errors associated with the usage of subject include the following:

Don't use present continuous to express possession; use present simple tense.

Incorrect: I **am having** four cars.

Correct: I **have** four cars.

Avoid using "do not" after subject pronouns such as **he, it,** and.

Incorrect: She **do not** possess a mobile phone.

Correct: She **does not** possess a mobile phone.

When using "cope," don't add "up to it" to describe the coping ability of the subject.

Incorrect: Jackson struggled to **cope up** with the pressure.

Correct: Jackson struggled to **cope** with the pressure.

When comparing two individuals items, "than" should be followed by "that."

Incorrect: The quantity of his rice is **higher than** yours.

Correct: The quantity of his rice is **higher than that** of yours.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

He \_\_\_\_\_ possess leadership qualities. (A. do not B. does not)

Answer: B

Poor people \_\_\_\_\_ the tendency to blame others for their predicaments. (A. has B. have)

Answer: B

## **Predicate**

The predicate is the part of a clause or sentence that reveals the action of the subject. The predicate also tells us what the subject is. It is every other thing in a sentence that is not the subject.

Examples:

I **sing**.

He **was cooking** dinner when I came in.

There are many errors students and professionals make due to the wrong usage of predicates. Some of them are covered here:

When you start a statement with "once upon a time," you have to use past tense all through.

Incorrect: Once upon a time, there **is** a dog named Elvis.

Correct: Once upon a time, there **was** a dog named Elvis.

"Did" should be followed by present tense.

Incorrect: Philip did not **trained** with the first team yesterday.

Correct: Philip did not **train** with the first team yesterday.

Pronouns must agree with the nouns they are replacing.

Incorrect: Bob and **her** friend were not around when we got there.

Correct: Bob and **his** friend were not around when we got there.

## **MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Once upon a time, a village chief \_\_\_\_\_ a magic box. (A. was given B. is given)

Answer: A

Fernandez and Ricardo did not \_\_\_\_\_ until our arrival. (A. leave B. left)

Answer: A

## Direct Objects

In English grammar, direct objects follow intransitive verbs. Direct objects can be a noun, pronoun, phrase or verb. They identify who or what receives the action of a transitive verb in a sentence or clause. The action of the subject is felt by the direct object. For example, in the statement, "Craig baked a cake," the direct object is "a cake." Here are some common errors writers and speakers of the English language commit when using direct objects:

Don't add "s" to "furniture."

Incorrect: My father bought some **furnitures** yesterday.

Correct: My father bought some **furniture** yesterday.

Don't add "s" to "information."

Incorrect: Have you got any **informations** on the whereabouts of Lucinda?

Correct: Have you got any **information** on the whereabouts of Lucinda?

Don't add "s" to "luggage."

Incorrect: When will you pack your **luggages**?

Correct: When will you pack your **luggage**?

Don't add "s" to the noun after "any."

Incorrect: Is there any **breads** at home?

Correct: Is there any **bread** at home?

Avoid using "these" before "news."

Incorrect: She told me **these** news this morning.

Correct: She told me **this** news this morning.

Don't add "s" to expressions like "the blind," "the poor," "the dead" or "the unemployed."

Incorrect: It is high time the American Government started paying attention to **the poors**.

Correct: It is high time the American Government started paying attention to **the poor**.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

I have some vital \_\_\_\_\_ for you as regards the case. (A. information B. informations)

Answer: A

The \_\_\_\_ I saw at the king's palace was nothing short of amazing! (A. furnitures B. furniture)

Answer: B

### **Indirect Objects**

Indirect objects receive the action of the subject after the action has first affected the direct object. They are not the direct recipients of the action but they are affected too. It is important to note that it is not all sentences that have a direct object which also have indirect objects. For instance, in the sentence, "I threw the ball but Andrew got it," Andrew is an indirect object. Below are some common errors associated with indirect objects:

Put the indirect object at the end of the sentence when using "to."

Incorrect: She gave **to** John her pencil.

Correct: She gave her pencil **to** John.

You cannot have an indirect object for intransitive verbs.

Incorrect: Henry is snoring **drugs** heavily.

Correct: Henry is **snoring** heavily.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Please send \_\_\_\_\_. (A. to me the report B. the report to me)

Answer: B

Jonathan \_\_\_\_ on the ice. (A. skidded B. skidded the ball)

Answer: A

### **Clauses**

A clause refers to a group of words that has both a subject and a predicate. However, a clause cannot always be regarded as a full grammatical sentence. A clause can either be dependent or independent. An independent clause can stand alone and contains both a predicate and a subject. For example, “We visited Luxemburg last October” is an independent clause.

A dependent clause is also called a subordinate clause. It contains a subject and predicate but cannot stand alone as a sentence. In the sentence, “**Even though he made \$400 million**, he remains grounded,” the highlighted part is the dependent clause. Below are some common errors associated with clauses:

A defining subordinate clause should be introduced with “that,” not “which.”

Incorrect: The river **which** flows through Lisbon is murky.

Correct: The river **that** flows through Lisbon is murky.

A non-defining subordinate clause should be introduced with “which” not “that” while being separated with two commas.

Incorrect: The Nigerian river Benue, **that** flows through Niger, is murky and turbid.

Correct: The Nigerian river Benue, **which** flows through Niger, is murky and turbid.

A defining subordinate clause should be introduced with “who,” not “whose.”

Incorrect: The American military officer **whose** defeated the Italians became the president.

Correct: The American military officer **who** defeated the Italians became the president.

A non-defining subordinate clause should be introduced with “whose,” not “who” while being separated with two commas.

Incorrect: The King of England, **who** kingship was the reward for his heroics, was an unusual man.

Correct: The King of England, **whose** kingship was the reward for his heroics, was an unusual man.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

The Duke of Wellington, \_\_\_\_\_ peerage was the reward for his patriotism, was a great man. (A. who B. whose)

Answer: B

The teacher \_\_\_\_\_ came yesterday is my friend. (A. that B. which)

Answer: A

**Run-Ons**

A run-on sentence is a common error as a result of merging two sentences together without the right punctuation. The comma splice or comma fault is the most common run-on sentence. A comma splice occurs when a comma is used to separate two sentences in an inappropriate manner.

Examples:

Craig is a brilliant soccer player, he dances in an amazing way.

My mom is such a good cook, she gets angry at the slightest provocation.

To avoid these kinds of errors, do the following:

Use a semicolon.

Incorrect: Racism is not exclusive to any **culture**, it is a demon we all have to resist.

Correct: Racism is not exclusive to any **culture**; it is a demon we all have to resist.

Use three dots (ellipsis).

Incorrect: I could not have been acting **funny**, I am a poor comedian.

Correct: I could not have been acting **funny...** I am a poor comedian.

Use a colon.

Incorrect: I have a **confession**, I don't like making confessions!

Correct: I have a **confession:** I don't like making confessions!

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

I don't care about your welfare \_\_\_\_\_ it is all you care about. (A. , B. ;)

Answer: B

The teacher \_\_\_\_ came yesterday is my friend. (A. that B. which)

Answer: A

## Subordinators

Subordinators are not relative or subordinate clauses; they introduce them and join them to a main clause. A subordinator can be a relative noun that introduces an adjective clause, adverb clause, or noun clause in a sentence.

Examples:

Whoever claimed **that the sun revolves around the earth** was dead wrong.

My mother enjoyed **where my father selected** for their honeymoon.

Common errors related to subordinators are as follows:

Thinking that a dependent clause makes a complete sentence.

Incorrect: Because we love Kobe Bryant.

Correct: **We are here** because we love Kobe Bryant.

Use a comma when you start a sentence with a subordinator.

Incorrect: Because we love Kobe **Brant we** are here.

Correct: Because we love Kobe **Brant, we** are here.

The subordinator should come before a verb.

Incorrect: I went to the market after, I stopped at the bank.

Correct: After I went to the market, I stopped at the bank.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

She sold the food before, she persuaded the buyer. B. Before she sold the food, she persuaded the buyer.)

Answer: B

Due to \_\_\_\_ she could not make it. (A. technical reasons, B. technical reasons)



Answer: A

## Phrases

A phrase is a group of words used within a sentence as a unit to express a concept. Types of phrases include noun, gerund, appositive, infinitive, absolute, prepositional, participial, and verb.

Examples:

Sunday became **a cool, wet afternoon**.

She **might enjoy a massage**.

Do you know your phrases? Let's see:

It is "one and the same" and not "one in the same."

Incorrect: The two balls are **one in the same**.

Correct: The two balls are **one and the same**.

It is "each one worse than the last" and not "each one worse than the next."

Incorrect: The disasters kept coming, **each one worse than the next**.

Correct: The disasters kept coming, **each one worse than the last**.

It is "by accident" and not "on accident."

Incorrect: The truck crushed the ball **on** accident.

Correct: The truck crushed the ball **by** accident.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Dan slapped him to \_\_\_\_ revenge on him. (A. exact B. extract)

Answer: A

I am giving you \_\_\_\_ to make your choice. (A. leadway B. leeway)

Answer: B

## Noun/Verb Phrases

A noun phrase is also referred to a nominal phrase. These phrases have a noun as their head. They are very common and arguably the most common of

all the types of phrases.

Examples:

**Those apparels** are very expensive

I possess **a lot of money**.

A verb phrase, on the other hand, is a part of a sentence structure that contains both the verb as well as an indirect or direct object. Verb phrases are upgrades on verbs because they contain both the verb as well as the complement.

Examples:

Mike **was walking** quickly to the market.

Our maid **is fixing** us dinner.

Common errors people make when they use noun and verb phrases are displayed below:

Don't use a past participle instead of a continuous tense to express an ongoing action.

Incorrect: The teacher **is written** a report.

Correct: The teacher **is writing** a report.

Never forget to add an "e" in the "-ed" form of regular verbs.

Incorrect: Kate and Vanessa **joind** the team last year.

Correct: Kate and Vanessa **joined** the team last year.

The plural form of "scenery" is not "sceneries."

Incorrect: The **sceneries** here **are** not pleasant.

Correct: The **scenery** here **is** not pleasant.

Don't add "brother" to "cousin."

Incorrect: Bob is my **cousin brother**.

Correct: Bob is my **cousin**.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

One of my \_\_\_\_ will be coming for the party. (A. friends B. friend)

Answer: A

I am learning a new \_\_\_\_\_. (A. poetry B. poem)

Answer: B

## **Prepositional/Absolute**

Prepositional phrases act as indirect objects in a sentence. Prepositions are used to specify why, how, where, and when. Hence, a prepositional phrase has a preposition and its object. A prepositional phrase can be a group of words or a single word expressing an idea.

Examples:

Yesterday was the first day **of the month**.

Last week, we met **in the auditorium**.

Absolute phrases tell more about a circumstance or situation in the main clause of a sentence. They are also known as nominative absolute because they contain a noun and its modifiers. They can be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence.

Examples:

**The night beginning to turn cold**, we made a fire to keep us warm.

The birds circled high above us, **their tiny frames sleek and brown against the blue sky**.

Common errors both students and professionals alike make when using absolutes and prepositional phrases are explored below:

When describing a request, “for” should follow “ask.”

Incorrect: She **asked** a drink.

Correct: She **asked for** a drink.

Don’t add “with” to “met” or “meet.”

Incorrect: I **met with** your mom last month at a party.

Correct: I **met** your mom last month at a party.

“Insist” should be followed by “on,” and not “to.”

Incorrect: My father insisted **to** seeing my report card.

Correct: My father insisted **on** seeing my report card.

Don’t fail to separate the absolute phrase with a comma.

Incorrect: **Weather permitting** we shall meet tomorrow.

Correct: **Weather permitting,** we shall meet tomorrow.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

The sun having \_\_\_\_\_, we set out on our journey. (A. rose B. risen)

Answer: B

He will insist \_\_\_\_\_ speaking with you. (A. on B. to)

Answer: A

## **Appositives**

Appositives are nouns or pronouns that identify or rename another noun or pronoun in some certain ways. A typical appositive phrase consists of an appositive and its modifiers. An appositive phrase can either be restrictive (essential) or nonrestrictive (nonessential).

Examples:

Author **Oscar Wilde** wrote several books over the course of his career.

William Shakespeare’s novel, **Macbeth**, remains one of the best literary works ever.

While writing and speaking, the following error is often committed when using appositives:

Separate with commas where and when necessary.

Incorrect: Bruno **Fernandes a former Sporting Lisbon player** has just signed with Manchester United.

Correct: Bruno **Fernandes, a former Sporting Lisbon player,** has just signed with Manchester United.

**MCQs: Select the underlined word or phrase that needs to be changed to make the sentence accurate:**

Merlin, the Wizard of Oz, has summoned every wizard in the world to a meeting at Old Trafford. (A. the Wizard of Oz, B. No error C. wizard in the world)

Answer: B

The dogs, who were basset hounds, were never in doubt to win the race. (A. The dogs, who B. basset hounds were C. No error)

Answer: C

## **Introductions**

An introduction is the beginning section of a book or article. It is the first few paragraphs that state out the goals of the writing and what readers can expect as they read on. Check the introductory part of this book for further reference on what an introduction looks like. It does not necessarily have to be lengthy. Really, it's a brief summary or explanation of a document.

A good introduction will achieve the following:

- It will answer the question of “why should I read this?”
- It engages the audience
- It gives the readers a preview of the material

There is a good and bad way to write an introduction. When writing an introduction, you should avoid the following things:

- **Wasting words:** Don't just write to fill a blank space. You should be deliberate and intentional with every sentence.
- **Using long sentences:** It becomes difficult and boring when you have close to 40 to 50 words in a sentence. It is pardonable in academic writing but not good for articles or blog posts.
- **Making promises you cannot fulfill:** You should not tell your readers that they will find what is not obtainable in the article in your introduction. Encourage your audience to read on without being dishonest.
- **Explaining concepts you will explain later in the book or**

**article:** It becomes monotonous and repetitive when, in the introductory part, you explain a concept you will be explaining later in the book.

**Note:** You can work on the body of the article or book first before writing the introduction. This is not a rule you have to follow. However, it will help you to write a better introduction. You already have the content of the book. Hence, you will be able to tell the readers what to expect with a greater level of precision and accuracy.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

A good paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_. (A. precise and concise B. unnecessarily detailed)

Answer: A

Several long sentences in a paragraph are a feature of \_\_\_\_\_. (A. a good introduction B. a bad introduction)

Answer: B

## **Body Paragraphs**

A body paragraph is a group or collection of related sentences about a particular idea. The writer achieves his or her objectives with the body paragraphs as stated out in the introduction. Essays and articles contain several body paragraphs. Hence, the main errors committed as regards body paragraphs, apart from grammatical errors, have to do with organization. It is vital that a writer is able to arrange his or her thoughts in such a way that he or she will be able to drive home their points.

## **Common Mistakes in Writing a Paragraph**

Below are 5 common mistakes that are made in writing paragraphs:

- **Absence of a topic sentence:** A good paragraph must have a topic sentence. The topic sentence carries the main idea you are trying to convey to your readers. Subsequent sentences in the paragraph are meant to support the topic sentence.
- **Too-long paragraphs:** When a paragraph is too long, it frustrates readers. You should never forget that there are people who will read what you are writing. Hence, avoid writing more than 8

sentences in a paragraph.

- **Too-short paragraphs:** Some students are fond of writing two to three sentences in a paragraph. A paragraph should be detailed and concise about the central idea you are conveying.
- **Multiple ideas:** A paragraph should only explain one particular line of thought or idea. You should avoid cramming several ideas into one paragraph.
- **Poor structure:** Poor structure in writing a paragraph can be related to the arrangement or focus of the paragraphs. Every paragraph should have a focus. It is better to start with a topic sentence first before writing the subordinate sentences.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

A good paragraph should start with \_\_\_\_\_. (A. a topic sentence B. an explanation)

Answer: A

Multiple ideas in a body paragraph should be \_\_\_\_\_. (A. embraced B. avoided)

Answer: B

## **Conclusions**

A conclusion is the closing part of a document or write-up. When you write an article, paper, or book, the conclusion is the part where you sum up your arguments and points. It is a summary of everything you have been trying to discuss and put across to your audience. You have to think about the main points of the book to be able to write a good conclusion.

### **Common Errors You Should Avoid When Writing a Conclusion**

You should avoid the following mistakes when writing a conclusion:

- **Introducing new information:** Your conclusion should not contain any information that you have not mentioned previously.
- **Stuffing too much information into a paragraph:** In the case of a book or an academic writing, you may have a reasonable number of things you want to mention in the introduction. However, you must avoid stuffing a lot of information in a paragraph. Break things up to make it easier and organized for smooth reading.

- **Not including a topic sentence:** The rule of topic sentence for a body paragraph also applies to a conclusion. The paragraphs of your conclusion should have a topic sentence in the first or second statement.
- **Lack of cohesion:** Your words and sentences should transition smoothly. Avoid writing dissimilar sentences together in a paragraph, to make your writing cohesive and coherent.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

When writing a conclusion, you should \_\_\_\_\_. (A. introduce a new concept B. reiterate previous ideas)

Answer: B

A good conclusion should \_\_\_\_\_. (A. lack cohesion B. be summative)

Answer: B

## **Thesis**

A thesis is also called a dissertation. It is a document that contains your research and findings you submit to show that you are qualified to possess a professional certification or academic degree. A good thesis contains what you intend to argue and how you intend to argue it. A thesis statement often appears at the latter part of the introductory paragraph of the paper. It offers the readers a concise summary of the claim of a research paper.

### **Common Errors In Thesis Statement**

The following mistakes in thesis statement can embarrass you:

**Fragmented statement:** A thesis must make a complete thought. You cannot have fragmented statements as a thesis statement. For example:

Incorrect: The food in the UK is unhealthy and expensive; so we should all consider not eating it anymore.

Correct: Due to the prevalence of obesity in the UK, lawmakers should look into creating a plan to reduce the price of healthier foods to help everyone to be able to afford high-quality foods.

**Wordiness:** Your thesis statement should not be too wordy. You will confuse your readers when your thesis statement is too long. Make it as short,



detailed, and precise as possible.

**Incorrect:** Most athletes, such as those who play for organizations like the NCAA or colleges, do not earn enough money, which is terrible because they deserve to earn more for their hard work due to the fact that colleges take advantage of the sports these athletes pay by earning profits.

**Correct:** NCAA athletes should be given payment that is commensurate to their efforts because they are generating revenue for universities by putting their bodies and health on the line.

**Too obvious or basic:** It is expected that your writing should mature as you move through school. Hence, an obvious or basic thesis statement is not accepted.

**Incorrect:** In this paper, I will be discussing the importance of getting enough sleep every day.

**Correct:** Getting adequate sleep is good for your health as it helps your body recover quickly and have enough energy required for optimal performance in your daily tasks.

**Lack of purpose:** Your thesis statement should be addressing a particular thing. It should not just be a random cluster of words.

**Incorrect:** As far as I am concerned, these blue socks are the prettiest ones in the drawer.

**Correct:** Students should be given the liberty to express themselves as unique individuals by selecting any type of socks and shoes they want to wear to school.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

An excellent thesis statement should be \_\_\_\_\_. (A. basic and obvious B. purposeful and concise)

Answer: B

A wordy thesis statement is \_\_\_\_\_. (A. confusing B. the best)

Answer: A

# Chapter 5: Spelling and Formatting

Words are the foundation of English grammar. Once you spell a word wrongly, you will either create a new word and alter the meaning of the word or create a meaningless word. Therefore, it is imperative that you pay attention to the spelling of words. You have to spell words correctly consistently as a good writer of the English language. In this chapter, we will explore common spelling errors as well as the wrong usage of some other important components of English grammar.

## Common Spelling Mistakes

It is important that you spell words correctly to convey the right message. Spelling errors lead to an embarrassing mutation of words. Hence, you have to be at the top of your game all the time. A list of common spelling mistakes will be endless. Below are some most common spelling mistakes you need to avoid:

Incorrect: acceptable

Correct: acceptable

Incorrect: absense, absance

Correct: absence

Incorrect: accomodate

Correct: accommodate

Incorrect: acknowlege, aknowledge

Correct: acknowledge

Incorrect: acquaintence, aquaintance

Correct: acquaintance

Incorrect: aquire

Correct: acquire

Incorrect: adultary

Correct: adultery  
Incorrect: adress  
Correct: address  
Incorrect: accidental  
Correct: accidentally  
Incorrect: adviseable, advizable  
Correct: advisable  
Incorrect: aquit  
Correct: acquit  
Incorrect: agression  
Correct: aggression  
Incorrect: allegaince  
Correct: allegiance  
Incorrect: allmost  
Correct: almost  
Incorrect: amatuer  
Correct: amateur  
Incorrect: anually  
Correct: annually  
Incorrect: aparent, aparent  
Correct: apparent  
Incorrect: awfull  
Correct: awful  
Incorrect: begining  
Correct: beginning

Incorrect: buisness

Correct: business

Incorrect: colum

Correct: column

Incorrect: cauhgt, caugt

Correct: caught

Incorrect: congradulate

Correct: congratulate

Incorrect: concencus

Correct: consensus

Incorrect: cooly

Correct: coolly

Incorrect: contraversy

Correct: controversy

Incorrect: dilema

Correct: dilemma

Incorrect: embarass

Correct: embarrass

Incorrect: facinating

Correct: fascinating

Incorrect: immitate

Correct: imitate

Incorrect: innoculate

Correct: inoculate

Incorrect: writting

Correct: writing

Incorrect: visious

Correct: vicious

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

It is \_\_\_\_ to know that you will be coming around. (A. facinating B. fascinating C. fasinating)

Answer: B

I will not be able to \_\_\_\_ you in my house. (A. accommodate B. acomodate C. accomodate)

Answer: A

This hand sanitizer is no longer \_\_\_\_\_. (A. usable B. usable C. ucible)

Answer: A

The \_\_\_\_ of the president is no longer acceptable to the citizens of the nation. (A. tyranny B. tyrany C. tiranny)

Answer: A

**Vowels**

In the above examples, I deliberately did not include common spelling errors that have to do with the misplacement or elimination of vowels. There are some common mistakes people make when writing some words due to either a removal or misplacement of vowels. Such mistakes are seen below:

Incorrect: upholstry

Correct: upholstery

Incorrect: tomatos

Correct: tomatoes

Incorrect: then

Correct: than

Incorrect: speache, speeche

Correct: speech  
Incorrect: similer  
Correct: similar  
Incorrect: sargent  
Correct: sergeant  
Incorrect: seperate  
Correct: separate  
Incorrect: secretery, secratary  
Correct: secretary  
Incorrect: rime  
Correct: rhyme  
Incorrect: restarant, restaraunt  
Correct: restaurant  
Incorrect: religous, religius  
Correct: religious  
Incorrect: realy  
Correct: really  
Incorrect: readable  
Correct: readable  
Incorrect: quarentine  
Correct: quarantine  
Incorrect: prufe  
Correct: proof  
Incorrect: professer  
Correct: professor

Incorrect: parliment

Correct: parliament

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

I must confess that some of your claims are \_\_\_\_\_. (A. outrageous B. outragous C. outrageos)

Answer: A

My father has the \_\_\_\_\_ that Mr. Ben is a philanderer. (A. prufe B. proof C. prove)

Answer: B

There is a need for a thorough \_\_\_\_\_ of foreigners due to the outbreak of the Corona Virus. (A. quarantine B. quaranteine C. quarentine)

Answer: A

I am an \_\_\_\_\_; I am not \_\_\_\_\_. (A. atheist, religious B. athiest, religious C. athiest, religous)

Answer: A

**“I Before E”**

There are spelling errors that are peculiar to placing “I” before “e” and vice versa. These errors are also numerous. Below are some common examples:

Incorrect: percieve

Correct: perceive

Incorrect: acheive

Correct: achieve

Incorrect: athiest

Correct: atheist

Incorrect: beleive

Correct: believe

Incorrect: cheif

Correct: chief

Incorrect: decieve

Correct: deceive

Incorrect: foriegn

Correct: foreign

Incorrect: freind

Correct: friend

Incorrect: heirarchy

Correct: hierarchy

Incorrect: hygine, hygeine

Correct: hygiene

Incorrect: liesure

Correct: leisure

Incorrect: neice

Correct: niece

Incorrect: niegbour

Correct: neighbor

Incorrect: recieve

Correct: receive

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

My \_\_\_\_ and I \_\_\_\_ a gift from my uncle. (A. niece, received B. niece, recieved C. neice, received)

Answer: A

I need to read a book to improve my English during my \_\_\_\_ time. (A.



liesure B. leisure C. lecture)

Answer: B

The \_\_\_\_ of leadership in my country does not permit \_\_\_\_ to rule. (A. hierarchy, foreigners B. heirarchy, forigners C. hierarchy, foriegners)

Answer: A

## **Suffixes**

Suffixes are a group of letters that are added to the ending part of words to alter their meaning or function. A suffix can also be just a letter. Suffixes alter the grammatical function of the root word.

Examples:

The highlighted letters below are examples of suffixes.

Fon**dest**

Art**ist**

Read**er**

Read**able**

Tast**y**

## **Common Suffix Errors**

There are mistakes people make when spelling words by getting the suffix wrong. Below are some common examples:

Incorrect: faithfull

Correct: faithful

Incorrect: accidental, accidently

Correct: accidentally

Incorrect: bellweather

Correct: bellwether

Incorrect: dumbell

Correct: dumbbell

Incorrect: drunkenness

Correct: drunkenness

Incorrect: equiptment

Correct: equipment

Incorrect: gratefull, grateful

Correct: grateful

Incorrect: misspell, misspel

Correct: misspell

Incorrect: skillfull

Correct: skilful

Incorrect: successfull

Correct: successful

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

The president says he is \_\_\_\_ to the good people of America for their indefatigable support. (A. grateful B. gratefull C. greatfool)

Answer: A

Stamford Bridge is a world-class stadium with state-of-the-art \_\_\_\_ and facilities. (A. equiptment B. equipment C. equiupment)

Answer: B

\_\_\_\_ is fast becoming a prevalent social ill that has to be tackled quickly by the government of America. (A. Drunkenness B. Drunkeness C. Drunkeeness)

Answer: A

**Infixes**

Infixes are word elements that can be added within the base form of a word to create a new word or alter the meaning the base word. Unlike prefixes or suffixes, infixes are not added to the beginning or end of the base form of a word. It is important to note that infixes are rarely used in formal writing.

The infixes are highlighted in the words below:

Halle**bloody**lujah

Edum**ac**ation

sophist**im**acated

### **Common Mistakes When Writing Infixes**

Unlike prefixes and suffixes, infixes are very rare. However, there are spelling mistakes people make when writing them. Here are some of them:

The plural form of “cupful” is not “cupfuls” but “cupsful.”

Incorrect: cupfuls

Correct: cupsful

The plural form of “passerby” is not “passerbies” but “passersby.”

Incorrect: passerbies

Correct: passersby

The plural form of “spoonful” is not “spoonfuls” but “spoonsful.”

Incorrect: spoonfuls

Correct: spoonsful

### **MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

An infix is an affix that can be inserted to the beginning or end of the base form of a word. (A. True B. false C. I don't care)

Answer: B

During the encounter between the cops and MS-13 gang at Los Angeles, innocent \_\_\_\_\_ were not spared by the deadly gang. (A. passerbies B. passersby C. passers by)

Answer: B

### **Prefixes**

Prefixes are syllables or a group of syllables that are added to the beginning of a word that alters the meaning or grammatical function of that word. With prefixes, it is possible to create different words that can be easily understood

by writers and speakers everywhere.

The prefixes are highlighted in the examples below:

**Dis**believe

**Re**evaluate

**De**activate

**Il**legal

**Im**permeable

### **Common Errors In Writing And Using Prefixes**

Errors in adding prefixes often lead to creating words that do not exist. Below are some common errors people make when writing or using infixes:

It should be “incorrect” and not “misincorrect” or “disincorrect.”

Incorrect: **mis**incorrect

Incorrect: **dis**incorrect

Correct: **in**correct

It should be “terror” or “counterterrorism” and not “noerror” or “counterterror.”

Incorrect: **no**error

Incorrect: **count**error

Correct: **t**error, **count**error

It should be “discontented” and not “uncontented.”

Incorrect: **un**contented

Correct: **dis**contented

### **MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

My failure to comply with the new policy was not out of defiance but because I was \_\_\_\_ of it. (A. misaware B. unaware C. disaware)

Answer: B

Today,s protest is a product of \_\_\_\_\_ due to the way the workers were being treated by the manager recently. (A. uncontentment B. discontented C. discontentment)

Answer: C

## **Contradictions**

A contradiction is as simple as your mom telling you two years ago that you were born in 1980 only for her to show up today to say that your birth date is 1981. The two statements are **contradicting**. In English grammar, a contradiction is a statement that does not make sense because some part of it suggests the opposite of the others.

Example:

Larry is such an honest thief; he only steals cows.

The above statement is a contradiction because the fact that Larry is a thief means that there is nothing honest about him. Besides, stealing only cows does not make anyone honest!

## **Contradictions You Need to Watch Out For**

English grammar has express rules. However, some of the rules have exceptions that lead to contradictions. Below are some rules in English grammar with contradictions:

### **I before E**

English students are often told to put “I” before “e” when spelling except after “c.” The following words follow that rule:

- believe
- brief
- receive

**Note:** “e” came before “I” in “receive” because it was after the letter “c.”

However, there are contradictions to this rule with words such as:

- protein
- heirloom

- leisure
- weird

Therefore, your spelling guide is your best bet to ensure that you are not running afoul of spelling words correctly.

### **Starting a Statement with “Because”**

English students are also often told that “because” should not start a statement because it is a subordinate conjunction. It is often said that it needs a clause before it can relate to the one after. However, you can reverse the position of the clause and you will still be fine.

For example:

We did not visit the cinema yesterday because we were grounded.

Because we were grounded, we did not visit the cinema yesterday.

### **MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

It felt so \_\_\_\_ to be sharing the same stage with my idol. (A. wird B. weird C. wierd)

Answer: B

The new \_\_\_\_ teacher is just too hostile. (A. sceince B. sciene C. science)

Answer: C

### **Writing/Saying Dates**

Dates specify the specific, day, month, and year that an event took place. Dates are vital because they serve historical and reference purposes. There are rules that guide the way dates are to be written in English. Below are some wrong ways people write dates and the appropriate way to go about them:

You should always write years in numerals except at the beginning of a sentence.

Incorrect: The year **nineteen ninety-four** was indeed a memorable year for football lovers.

Correct: The year **1994** was indeed a memorable year for football lovers.

Correct: **Nineteen ninety-four** was indeed a memorable year for football lovers.

Use cardinal numbers (one, two, three) and not ordinal numbers (first, second, third) when referring to a specific date in the month-day date format.

Incorrect: Benjamin Burton was born on **May 13<sup>th</sup>**.

Correct: Benjamin Burton was born on **May 13**.

When using the month-day-year format, place commas after the day and the year.

Incorrect: On October **1<sup>st</sup>, 1960** King Joe was born.

Correct: On October **1<sup>st</sup>, 1960**, King Joe was born.

Correct: On October 1, 1960, King Joe was born.

Alternatively, don't use commas at all when using the day-month-year format.

Incorrect: On 12 **October**, 1960 King Joe was born.

Correct: On 12 **October** 1960 King Joe was born.

You can use an ordinal number when you are referring to a specific day of the month without mentioning the year.

Incorrect: Benjamin Burton was born **on the 13 of May**.

Correct: Benjamin Burton was born **on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May**.

Correct: Benjamin Burton was born **on May the thirteenth**.

Correct punctuation when writing days of the week:

Incorrect: **Saturday May 7** is my last day of work.

Correct: Saturday, May 7, is my last day of work.

Avoid apostrophes when writing centuries.

Incorrect: **In the 1800's**, men were more literate than in modern times.

Correct: **In the 1800s**, men were more literate than in modern times.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

The Titanic sank on \_\_\_\_\_. (A. 13 December 1914 B. 13 December, 1914 C. 13th December, 1914)

Answer: A

Women in the \_\_\_\_\_ were more courteous than today. (A. 1970s B. 1970's C. 1970s')

Answer: A

**Numbers**

It is always better to write out numbers zero to one hundred in nontechnical writing. Generally, it is preferable to write out numbers under ten. However, you have to be consistent. Below are common errors you need to avoid when writing numbers in a sentence:

Write numbers below 101 fully.

Incorrect: Ben said there are **40** reasons she likes rice, and not twenty.

Correct: Ben said there are **forty** reasons she likes rice, and not twenty.

Write numbers above 101 numerically.

Incorrect: In 2010, there were seventy-eight thousand, nine hundred thirty-nine people living in Rio de Janeiro.

Correct: In 2010, there were **78,939** people living in Rio de Janeiro.

It is “ninety” and not “ninty.”

Incorrect: Ben said there are **ninty** reasons she likes rice, and not twenty.

Correct: Ben said there are **ninety** reasons she likes rice, and not twenty.

It is “forty” and not “fourty.”

Incorrect: Ben said there are **fourty** reasons she likes rice, and not twenty.

Correct: Ben said there are **forty** reasons she likes rice, and not twenty.

Always spell out a word that is starting a sentence.

Incorrect: **127** boys showed interest in the show.



Correct: **One hundred twenty-seven** boys showed interest in the show.

Spell out round figures even when they are more than 101.

Incorrect: There were **5000** people in attendance during the show.

Correct: There were **five thousand** people in attendance during the show.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

My mom gave me \_\_\_\_ mangoes before I left home. (A. ten B. 10)

Answer: A

I could not control my tears when I found out that \_\_\_\_ out of the \_\_\_\_ are dead. (A. 14, 403 B. fourteen C. 403)

Answer: B

## **Times and Clocks**

It is inevitable to express time when writing once in a while. There are guidelines regarding how to show time when writing in the English language. However, some people flout these rules either due to ignorance or negligence. Below are simple rules that will help you avoid making mistakes when telling the time in written form:

Write times in numerical form except for midnight and noon.

Incorrect: The match will take place from **eight a.m. to ten p.m.**

Correct: The match will take place from **8 a.m. to 10 p.m.**

Correct: The match will take place from **8 a.m. to noon.**

Don't write "12" after writing "noon" or midnight.

Incorrect: The workshop will begin by **12 noon.**

Incorrect: The workshop will end by **12 midnight.**

Correct: The workshop will begin by **noon.**

Correct: The workshop will end by **midnight.**

The lowercase "a.m." and "p.m." should include periods.

Incorrect: The workshop will end by **5 am**.

Correct: The workshop will end by 5 a.m.

Don't use a dash with days of the week.

Incorrect: The workshop will be from **8-11 a.m.** on Mondays through Thursdays every month.

Correct: The workshop will be from **8 a.m. until 11 a.m.** on Mondays through Thursdays every month.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

My favorite TV show begins by \_\_\_\_ today. (A. 10 p.m. B. Ten p.m.)

Answer: A

I have to wake up by \_\_\_\_ to read. (A. 12 midnight B. midnight)

Answer: B

## Chapter 6: Advanced Writing Mistakes

Whatever is worth doing at all should be done with the whole of your strength. It is good to be able to speak at least basic English language for your daily needs. However, there is no reason why you should not aim at becoming an excellent writer and speaker of the language. It is important to note that you don't have to have a degree in the English language to be able to speak fluently or write excellently in it. All you need is the drive to learn and acquire grammatical and writing skills.

In this last chapter, we will explore advanced mistakes that even professional writers make when writing. The beautiful thing about knowing what not to do is that it will enable you to know what to do. Hence, knowing these mistakes will not only help you avoid them but write standard articles. If you have a dream to be an author or writer, this chapter is very critical for you. It is one thing to be able to spot spelling errors; it is quite another to spot issues that have to do with grammatical constructions.

### General Advanced Writing Mistakes

Below are some general advanced writing mistakes you need to avoid to move from being a mediocre to an excellent writer:

#### Not Defining The Goal Of Your Writing

The first thing you need to ask yourself when you want to write is why you are writing. The purpose you have in mind will determine the tone of the writing. If you are writing an academic article, you know that you have to be formal all the way through. You cannot make random and careless statements in academic writing. You will have to get enough sources for the article before you start. Every claim in academic writing will have to be backed up by relevant studies. For example:

Incorrect: We all know that students of Harvard University are better than students of Yale when it comes to academic performance.

Correct: According to Steve and Maloney (2012), the academic performance of Harvard University students is better than that of students of Yale in the last five years.

For blog posts, you can be a little bit relaxed. It is required of you to add relevant studies to increase the veracity of your claims. However, it is not as stringent as when you are writing an academic paper. Hence, you need to be able to discern whether you are writing to entertain or to present facts for educational purposes.

### **The Right Content For the Wrong Audience and Vice Versa**

It is not good enough to know the reason for your writing; you have to also know your audience. If your audiences are young people seeking fun, you have to write in such a way that will tickle their fancy. You will have to deliberately write to pique their interest. If your audience is people in the academic setting, you will have to be very careful to present facts in a logical manner. They will scrutinize your arrangement of points and how you arrived at your conclusion.

In the same way, if you are writing an article that will be read by kids, you have to make it as simple as possible. You will have to be deliberate about writing short, simple sentences that they can understand. You will have to use illustrations and bullet points to aid their comprehension. For example:

**Incorrect:** Snails are aquatic and terrestrial animals that hibernate during winter due to their ineptitude to withstand volatile conditions.

**Correct:** Snails are animals that can live on both water and land. They go into hiding during winter to be able to survive harsh weather conditions.

### **Fluff**

Fluff in writing is unnecessary words that are redundant. They are often added just to fill up blank pages. Fluff shows that the writer is bereft of ideas. It is easy to detect fluff because of its tendency to make a piece of writing boring and ridiculous. For example:

**Incorrect:** It is not good to treat women in an awful manner. Treating women in an awful manner is just not right. It is just not the right thing to do to treat women wrongly.

**Correct:** It is not good to treat women in an awful manner. Treating women awfully is a sign of lack of respect. It shows that such a person does not understand the value of a woman.

## **How To Avoid Fluff In Writing**

The following tips should help you avoid fluff in writing:

- Have a plan to write first and edit later
- Trim paragraphs to be short and concise

## **Specific Advanced Writing Mistakes**

Below are specific advance writing mistakes that are difficult to spot:

### **American and British English**

It is important to know your audience. There are some crucial differences in American and British English. You need to know these differences to be able to provide the right content for the right audience. Below are crucial differences in American and British English you need to notice:

#### Spellings

American: holiday

British: vacation

American: (car) hood

British: (car) bonnet

American: apartment

British: flat

#### Collective Nouns

In American English, collective nouns are singular, while they can be singular or plural in British English.

American: The band is playing tonight.

British: The band are playing tonight.

#### Past Tense

American: learned

British: learned or learnt

American: dreamed

British: dreamed or dreamt

American: burned

British: burned or burnt

### Order of Adjectives

The right order of adjectives in the English language is quantity, quality, size, age, shape, color, proper adjective, and qualifier.

Incorrect: I am impressed by that **really new, large black antique** car at the end of the road.

Correct: I am impressed by that **really large, new black antique** car at the end of the road.

### MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:

I would like to purchase those \_\_\_\_ dresses. (A. four big yellow B. big four yellow)

Answer: A

She is a \_\_\_\_ girl. (A. big tall B. tall big)

Answer: B

### Further versus Farther

These two words are often used interchangeably. However, they are not the same and cannot be used as such. “Further” has to do with a figurative distance while “farther” describes a physical distance. Below are the wrong and proper usages of these two words:

Incorrect: To move **farther** in life, you need to maintain your focus.

Correct: To move **further** in life, you need to maintain your focus.

Incorrect: The captain told me that we could not move **farther** than the short fence due to security reasons.

Correct: The captain told me that we could not move **further** than the short fence due to security reasons.

### MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:

If you complain \_\_\_\_, I am going to shoot you. (A. farther B. further)

Answer: B

Kingsley asked his father how much \_\_\_\_\_ he had to walk. (A. farther B. further)

Answer: A

## Clichés

A cliché is an expression that has lost its original meaning or novelty due to being overused. Such expressions once held sway but started becoming boring and irritating because they have been used severely and extensively. Below are examples of clichés and expressions you can use instead of them:

Cliché: only time will tell

Replacement: to be unveiled over time

Cliché: in the nick of time

Replacement: to take place just in time

Cliché: lost track of time

Replacement: to stop paying attention to the time

## Number Agreement

Since pronouns are used in place of a noun, there must be an agreement between the number of the noun and the pronoun that is replacing it. A singular pronoun has to replace a singular noun and vice versa. Below are statements that do not show number agreement, and their corrections:

Incorrect: The cat climbed the tree but **they** stopped at the top of the branch.

Correct: The cat climbed the tree but **it** stopped at the top of the branch.

Incorrect: Everyone **are** trying to do what is best for **them**.

Correct: Everyone **is** trying to do what is best for **him or her**.

Incorrect: Dan and John are here to defend **himself**.

Correct: Dan and John are here to defend **themselves**.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

John and Billy were so unruly that no one wanted to be \_\_\_\_ friend. (A. her  
B. their)

Answer: B

Soldiers sacrifice a lot to keep \_\_\_\_ in a good physical condition. (A.  
themselves B. itself)

Answer: A

**Feel Good versus Feel Well**

“Feel well” and “feel good” are often mistaken to mean the same thing. However, they are not the same. “Feel well” has to do with the state of your health while “feel good” has to do with your state of mind. When you are feeling well, you are physically healthy. However, when you are feeling good, you are happy. Below are some wrong and proper usages of these two phrases:

Incorrect: I went to see my doctor this morning because I was not **feeling good**.

Correct: I went to see my doctor this morning because I was not **feeling well**.

Incorrect: I **feel well** this morning after enjoying myself at the party last night.

Correct: I **feel good** this morning after enjoying myself at the party last night.

**MCQs: Choose the appropriate options from the statements below:**

Samantha was apparently \_\_\_\_ this morning after she was discharged from the clinic yesterday. (A. feeling well B. feeling good)

Answer: A

The new coach has improved the mood in the dressing room as the players claimed that they are now \_\_\_\_\_. (A. feeling good B. feeling well)

Answer: A



## Active Voice versus Passive Voices

In an active voice, the subject acts upon the verb. However, in a passive voice, the subject receives the action of the verb. When the passive voice is used properly, it is correct. However, when it is not used in moderation, it becomes weak and incorrect.

Examples of Active Voice:

Monkeys love bananas.

The dog tossed the bone away.

Examples of Passive Voice:

Bananas are loved by monkeys.

The bone was tossed away by the dog.

## Wrong usages of Active and Passive Voices

Below are some examples of the incorrect usage of active and passive voices and how to remedy them:

Don't use the passive voice when you should take responsibility for your actions.

Incorrect: An error occurred on your account, but **several attempts were made** to remedy it.

Correct: We made an error on your account, but **we have made every attempt** to remedy it.

Make sure to identify the subjects in the following clauses:

Incorrect: **If there are any suggestions**, I can be reached at the number below.

Correct: **If you have any suggestions**, call me at the number below.

## MCQs: Change the following passive voices to active voices:

Was a zoo visited by you? (A. Have you been visiting a zoo? by B. Was you visit a zoo? C. Did you visit a zoo?)

Answer: C

He will be praised very much by you. (A. You will praise him very much B. You will be praising him very much C. You will have to praise him very much)

Answer: A

### **Except versus Accept**

Students are often guilty of using “accept” when “except” would be more appropriate and vice versa. “Accept” means to receive something offered or agree with something or someone. On the other hand, “except” means excluding something or someone. Hence, the two words are not synonymous.

Here are some common wrong usages of these words and the appropriate way to use them:

Incorrect: My mother can tolerate any other behavior from me **accept** stealing from others.

Correct: My mother can tolerate any other behavior from me **except** stealing from others.

Incorrect: I have no doubt that Bob will **except** this beautiful gift.

Correct: I have no doubt that Bob will **accept** this beautiful gift.

### **MCQs: Change the following passive voices to active voices:**

Please, will you \_\_\_\_ my gift? (A. except B. accept)

Answer: B

Every member of the crew were all smiles \_\_\_\_ Harry. (A. except B. accept)

Answer: A

## **Conclusion**

The attitude to learn is an attribute that you must never lose. I believe you have learned a lot of important things that will help you speak and write English more effectively. However, learning must never end here. As much as this book covered a wide range of grammatical and spelling errors, it does not cover every error in the English language. Hence, it is imperative that you continue to seek avenues to learn more and continue to improve.

You don't have to be a native speaker before you can write and communicate effectively in the English language. There have been people who have won awards for literary works in the English language who were not native speakers. Hence, the only limitation to your efficiency in English grammar is the one you place on yourself. You will only be as good as you want to be.

However, desire is not enough. You have to take deliberate steps to improve yourself every day. Buy books and read quality material that can improve your speaking and writing. The quality of your life is equivalent to what you do with your resources. Your money and time are two vital resources you have to utilize judiciously. Invest your time and money in activities that will improve your life!

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[T1]

[T2] Changed up because of too many "I"s

[T3] Redundant use of the word "blunder"

[T4] "blunders" is an unusual and colorful word, so we should only use it very occasionally as it distracts from the type of information you're trying to teach the reader. GOING FORWARD, throughout the book, please try other synonyms such as: errors, mistakes, gaffes (use this one sparingly)...

[T5] This seems arbitrary and doesn't make a lot of sense to me

[T6] Oh glory--writer decided to change the format of these MCQs. I'll make everything literate as usual Dane, but you please decide which format you like better, and lay that out consistently of course.