The Business Writer's Alphabetical Reference

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A

A, An

A and *an* are articles that proceed and identify nouns. *A* and *an* can also be used to mean one of something. The choice of *a* or *an* before a noun is based on the phonetic sound of the first letter in the word, not the written letter.

■ *A* is used before all words that begin with consonants.

Example: a kite, a man, a tomato, a large apple

Exception: *An* is used before words that begin with an unsounded *h*.

Example: an honor, an honest mistake

■ *An* is used before all words that begin with vowels.

Example: an apple, an egg, an Italian, an onion, an umbrella

Exception: When a word begins with *u* and sounds like *you,* then *a* is used as the article.

Example: a union, a used car

■ When a word begins with *o* and sounds like *won,* then *a* is used.

Example: A one-time offer

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are formed from the first letters of words or shortened versions of a word.

Example: Automated Teller Machine, ATM

Example: Professor, Prof.

Abbreviations are used as space savers. Abbreviations that can be pronounced are called **acronyms**.

Example: AIDS is an acronym; HIV is an abbreviation.

Do not use periods with acronyms.

Example: NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Titles Before and After Names

■ Use abbreviations for titles before names, and add a period after the abbreviation.

Example: Dr., Mr., Mrs., Rep.

Exception: *Miss* is not an abbreviation.

■ Use abbreviations for titles or degrees after names.

Example: Sr., Jr., M.D., Ph.D.

Exception: Some sources do not recommend using periods for degrees.

■ Don't use periods for abbreviations used both before and after a name at the same time.

Example: Dr. Gary Wilson Jr

■ Don't use a comma to separate *Jr.* or *Sr.* at the end of someone's name.

■ Don't abbreviate a title that is not attached to a name.

Correct: I went to the doctor yesterday.

Incorrect: I went to the dr. yesterday.

Names

■ Familiar institutions are often abbreviated.

Example: MIT, FBI, UN

■ Countries are often abbreviated.

Example: U.S.A.

U.S.A. can also be written as USA, but U.S. with periods is better. You can use U.S. as a modifier (U.S. foreign policy), but write it out (United States) when used as a noun.

Example: We want to visit the United States.

■ Company names are sometimes abbreviated.

Example: IBM, NBC, ITT

■ Famous people's names are sometimes abbreviated.

Example: MLK, JFK, FDR

■ Familiar objects are sometimes abbreviated.

Example: CD, TV, DVR, PC

Mathematical Units and Measurements

Mathematical units and measurements can be abbreviated in technical writing. Add a space between the number and the abbreviation.

Example: 20 ft, 30 lb

When used as a modifier, add a hyphen between the number and unit.

Example: a 20-ft ceiling

See *Abbreviations for Measurements* and *Abbreviations for Numbers*

Long Phrases

Long common phrases can be abbreviated and used without periods.

Example: miles per hour, mph; revolutions per minute, rpm

Words Used with Numbers

A.M. and *P.M.* can be written in upper or lower case with periods. *A.D.* and *B.C.* are written in upper case with periods. Here are some usage tips:

- *A.D.* appears before the date.

- *B.C.* appears after the date.

- *A.D.* and *B.C.* are sometimes replaced by *B.C.E.* (before the common era) and *C.E.* (common era).

Common Latin Terms

Common Latin terms are usually abbreviated.

Example: etc., et cetera, and so forth; i.e., id est, that is; e.g., exempli gratia, for example; et al., et alii, and others

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Use a comma after *i.e.* or *e.g.* to set them apart as introductory modifiers. Do not italicize or underline the abbreviations of Latin terms. The use of periods to punctuate Latin abbreviations varies depending on the term. Table 2.1 lists Latin abbreviations and the proper period punctuation.

Table 2.1 Punctuation and English Meanings of Latin Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Latin	English Meaning
A.B.	*artium baccalaureus*	bachelor of arts
A.D.	*anno Domini*	in the year of the Lord
A.M.	*ante meridiem*	before midday
c., ca., or cca.	*circa*	around or about
cf.	*confer*	bring together
C.V.	*curriculum vitae*	course of life
cwt.	*centum weight*	hundredweight
D.D.	*divinitatis doctor*	teacher of divinity
DG, D.G., or DEI GRA	*dei gratia*	by the grace of God
D.Lit.	*doctor litterarum*	teacher of literature
D.M.	*doctor medicinae*	teacher of medicine
D.Phil.	*doctor philosophiae*	teacher of philosophy
D.V.	*deo volente*	God willing
ead.	*eadem*	the same man
e.g.	*exempli gratia*	for example
et al.	*et alia*	and others
etc.	*et cetera*	and other things
fl.	*floruit*	period when something flourishes
ibid.	*ibidem*	in the same place
id.	*idem*	the same man
i.a.	*inter alia*	among other things
i.e.	*id est*	that is
J.D.	*Juris Doctor*	teacher of the law
lb	*libra*	pound

(continues)

Table 2.1 *(continued)*

Abbreviation	Latin	English Meaning
M.A.	*magister artium*	master of arts
M.O.	*modus operandi*	method of operating
N.B.	*nota bene*	note well
nem. con.	*nemine contradicente*	with no one speaking against
op. cit.	*opera citato*	in the same article or book as mentioned before
p.a.	*per annum*	through a year
per cent.	*per centum*	for each one hundredth, used in English as *percent*
Ph.D.	*philosophiae doctor*	teacher of philosophy
P.M.	*post meridiem*	after midday
p.m.a.	*post mortem auctoris*	after the author's death
p.p. or per pro.	*per procurationem*	through the agency of
PRN	*pro re nata*	as needed for a dose of medication
pro tem.	*pro tempore*	for the time being
P.S.	*post scriptum*	after what has been written
Q.D.	*quaque die*	every day for a dose of medication
Q.E.D.	*quod erat demonstrandum*	which was demonstrated
q.v.	*quod videre*	which to see
Re	*in re*	in the matter of
REG	*regina*	queen
R.I.P	*requiescat in pace*	may he or she rest in peace
s.o.s.	*si opus sit*	if there is need
viz.	*videlicet*	namely, precisely
vs. or v.	*versus*	against

States and Territories

States and territories can be abbreviated in references and addresses, but do not abbreviate states and territories in normal writing. Abbreviations accepted by the U.S. Postal Service are listed on its Web site. Do not use periods with state abbreviations.

For addresses on envelopes, you do not need a comma to separate a city from a state abbreviation. If you spell out the state name, you do need a comma.

Example: Dallas TX or Dallas, Texas

For the District of Columbia, *DC* can be written with or without periods.

You can abbreviate *Saint* in place names.

Example: St. Louis

Things You Should Not Abbreviate

For formal business writing, do not abbreviate the following:

- Words like *through* (thru) or *night* (nite)
- Days of the week
- Months
- Words that begin a sentence
- People's names, such as Charles (Chas.) or James (Jas.)
- State names when not part of an address
- Military titles

Spacing and Periods for Abbreviations

Consider the following tips on the use of spacing and periods in abbreviations:

- Abbreviations of units of measure are written without periods.

Example: 30 ft, 20 lb

- When abbreviating inches, you need a period to avoid confusion with the word *in*.

- Use periods for lowercase abbreviations such as *e.g.* and *i.e.*

- Common long phrase abbreviations do not use periods, such as *mph, mpg,* or *rpm.*

- When an abbreviation with periods ends a sentence, the period for the abbreviation is used as the sentence period.

- Academic degrees can be written with or without periods.

Example: MBA or M.B.A, BS or B.S.

- People's initials should include a period and space.

Example: T. R. Smith

- Don't let line breaks come in the middle of someone's initials.

Guidelines for Using Abbreviations in Your Writing

When introducing an abbreviation into your writing, spell out the term the first time it is used followed by the abbreviation in parentheses.

Example: cash on delivery (COD)

Use the abbreviation alone after the initial definition. Do not follow an abbreviation with a word that is included in the abbreviation.

Incorrect: ATM machine

Correct: ATM

To form the plural of an abbreviation or acronym, add a lower case *s*. Do not add an apostrophe. Do not make up abbreviations to save space in your business documents.

Abbreviations for Measurements

You can use abbreviations for common measurements when space is limited or when the measurements appear in a table. Table 2.2 lists the common abbreviations for measurements.

Table 2.2 Common Abbreviations for Measurements

Measurement	Abbreviation
Bits per second	bps
centimeters	cm
degrees	° or deg
dots per inch	dpi
feet	ft or '
gigabits per second	Gbps
gigabytes	GB
gigahertz	GHz
grams	g
Hertz	Hz
hours	hr
inches	in or "
kilobits per second	Kbps
kilobytes	KB
kilobytes per second	KBps
kilograms	kg
kilohertz	kHz
kilometers	km
lines	li
megabits per second	Mbps
megabytes	MB

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Table 2.2 *(continued)*

Measurement	Abbreviation
megabytes per second	MBps
megahertz	MHz
meters	m
miles	mi
millimeters	mm
milliseconds	msec or ms
picas	pi
points	pt
points per inch	ppi
seconds	sec or s
weeks	wk
years	yr

Abbreviations for Numbers

The abbreviation for number (no.) or the number sign (#) is normally not used.

Incorrect: Building No. 48

Correct: Building 48

Incorrect: Invoice #3219

Correct: Invoice 3219

Incorrect: Page no. 102

Correct: Page 102

In some situations, you may add the word *number* and not use the abbreviation.

Example: When we reviewed the list of charges against him, number five was discussed the most by the jury.

Above, Below

Do not use *above* or *below* to reference tables, visuals, or forms on the current page or on a previous or next page. When the page is laid out, these terms may cause confusion. Repeat the name when referencing a table, visual, or form.

Example: You will see a list in Table 3. Keyboard Shortcuts …

Absolute Form of an Adjective

An **absolute adjective** is an adjective that functions as a noun.

Example: the poor

Absolute Phrase

An **absolute phrase** is a group of words consisting of a noun or pronoun, a participle, and modifiers.

Example: President of the workers' <u>union three out of four years</u> [absolute phrase], his leadership experience really stood out.

Absolute phrases do not connect to or modify any other word in a sentence; instead, they modify the entire sentence. Absolute phrases are often treated as parenthetical elements set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or a pair of commas.

Absolutely

The term *absolutely* should not be used in formal writing.

Incorrect: I am absolutely sure we'll win the contract.

Correct: I am very sure we'll win the contract.

Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns describe qualities, feelings, states, concepts, and events that have no physical existence. Abstract nouns are used to describe things that cannot be detected by the five senses but that exist as ideas or feelings.

Example: hope, freedom, happiness, idea

Abstract nouns can be countable or uncountable. Abstract nouns that refer to events are usually countable.

Example: a concept

Accent Marks

Foreign language words adopted into the English language sometimes use the accent marks from their source language. Most word processing software automatically adds accent marks to the words that require them.

Example: fiancé, protégé, cliché

French and Italian source words often contain *grave* (left-leaning) accent marks (e.g., *è*). A *diaeresis* (¨) over a letter signals the speaker that the letter begins a new syllable.

Example: noël and naïve

An *umlaut* (e.g., *ü*) looks similar to a diaeresis, but it modifies the sound of the vowel.

Some Spanish words use a tilde (*ñ*), which tells you that the *n* is pronounced like a *y*.

Example: piñata, niño

Accept, Except

Accept is a verb that means to agree to take something from someone.

Example: I always accept criticism from my mentor because I greatly respect her opinion.

Except is a preposition or conjunction that means not including.

Example: I work every day except Saturday.

Access, Excess

Think of *access* as part of the word *accessible* when determining its usage. *Access* means the ability to approach or enter, a way of approach, or the trait of being approachable.

Access can be a noun or verb.

- Noun: The only access to the storage area is through the break room.

- Verb: I can access my stock portfolio online.

Think of *excess* as part of the word *excessive* when determining usage. *Excess* means overabundance or overindulgence.

Excess can be a noun or an adjective.

- Noun: He was happy to have an excess of red pens.

- Adjective: We were charged an excess baggage fee of $25.

Acronyms

An **acronym** is a type of abbreviation that is formed by taking letters from a long phrase.

Example: radar, radio detection and ranging

Acronyms save time in speaking and writing, but they can be unclear and come across as jargon if used too much in business writing.

An **initialism** is an acronym whose letters do not make a word; the letters are pronounced individually.

Example: CBS, CIA, NFL

Action Verbs

Action verbs express achievement or something that a person, place, or thing does.

Example: eat, smile, think, run, jump, leap, cry

Action verbs are concise, persuasive, and easy for readers to understand. Use action verbs when writing résumés, cover letters, and sales copy.

Table 2.3 provides sample action verbs for use in your writing.

Table 2.3 Action Verbs

abandon	abduct	abolish	abscond	abuse
accelerate	accuse	achieve	acquire	act
adapt	add	address	adjust	administer
advance	advise	aim	allocate	analyze
answer	anticipate	apprehend	approach	appropriate
arbitrate	arrange	arrest	ascertain	assault
assemble	assess	attack	attain	audit
avert	bang	bar	beat	berate
bite	blast	block	blow	brighten
broke	buck	budget	built	bump
bury	bushwhack	calculate	catch	charge
chart	chase	check	choke	clap
clash	classify	climb	clip	clutch

coach	collapse	collar	collect	collide
command	commandeer	communicate	compile	complete
compose	compute	conduct	conserve	consolidate
construct	consult	control	coordinate	counsel
count	cram	crash	crawl	create
creep	cripple	crouch	cut	dance
dart	dash	deal	decide	deck
deduct	define	delegate	delineate	deliver
descend	describe	design	detect	determine
develop	devise	diagnose	dictate	dig
direct	discard	discover	display	dissect
distribute	ditch	dive	divert	do
dodge	dominate	dope	douse	draft
drag	drain	dramatize	drape	draw
dress	drill	drink	drip	drop
drown	drug	dry	duel	dunk
ease	edge	edit	eject	elevate
elope	elude	emerge	endure	engage
enjoin	ensnare	enter	equip	erupt
escape	establish	estimate	evacuate	evade
evaluate	evict	examine	exert	exhale
exit	expand	expedite	expel	experiment
explain	expose	extend	extirpate	extract
extricate	fade	fake	fall	falter
fan	fast	fear	feed	feel
fend	fight	file	fill	finance

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Table 2.3 (continued)

find	finger	fix	flag	flap
flash	flatten	flaunt	flay	flee
flick	flinch	fling	flip	flit
float	flog	flounder	flout	flush
fly	fondle	force	formulate	fornicate
found	fumble	furnish	gain	gallop
gather	generate	gesture	get	give
gnaw	gossip	gouge	grab	grapple
grasp	greet	grind	grip	gripe
grope	grow	growl	grunt	guide
gyrate	hack	hail	hammer	handle
hang	harass	haul	head	help
hesitate	hide	hijack	hit	hitch
hobble	hoist	hold	hover	hug
hurl	hurtle	hypothesize	identify	ignore
illustrate	imitate	implement	improve	improvise
inch	increase	indict	induce	inflict
influence	inform	inject	injure	insert
inspect	inspire	install	instigate	institute
interchange	interpret	interview	invade	invent
inventory	investigate	isolate	jab	jam
jar	jeer	jerk	jimmy	jingle
jolt	judge	jump	keel	kibitz
kick	kidnap	kill	kneel	knife
lash	launch	lead	lean	leap
learn	lecture	left	level	lick
limp	listen	log	lunge	lurch

maim	maintain	make	manage	mangle
manipulate	march	mark	massage	maul
measure	meddle	mediate	meet	mentor
mimic	mingle	mobilize	mock	model
molest	monitor	motivate	mourn	move
mumble	murder	muster	mutilate	nab
nag	nail	needle	negotiate	nick
nip	observe	obtain	occupy	offer
officiate	operate	order	organize	oversee
pack	paddle	page	pander	panic
parachute	parade	paralyze	park	parry
party	pass	pat	patrol	pause
paw	peel	peep	penetrate	perceive
perform	persuade	photograph	pick	picket
pile	pilot	pin	pinch	pirate
pitch	placate	plan	play	plod
plow	plunge	pocket	poke	polish
pore	pose	pounce	pout	pray
predict	preen	prepare	prescribe	present
preside	primp	print	process	prod
produce	program	project	promote	prompt
proofread	propel	protect	provide	provoke
pry	publicize	pull	pummel	pump
punch	purchase	pursue	push	question
quit	race	raid	raise	rally
ram	ransack	rape	rattle	ravage
rave	read	realize	receive	recline

Table 2.3 *(continued)*

recommend	reconcile	reconnoiter	record	recoup
recruit	redeem	reduce	reel	refer
regain	rejoin	relate	relax	relent
render	repair	repel	report	represent
repulse	research	resign	resist	resolve
respond	restore	retaliate	retreat	retrieve
reveal	review	ride	rip	rise
risk	rob	rock	roll	rub
run	rush	sail	salute	sap
save	saw	scale	scamper	scan
scare	scatter	scavenge	schedule	scold
scoop	scoot	score	scour	scout
scrape	scrawl	scream	screw	scrub
scruff	scuffle	sculpt	scuttle	seal
search	seduce	seize	select	sell
sense	serve	set	sever	sew
shake	shanghai	shape	sharpen	shave
shear	shell	shield	shift	shiver
shock	shoot	shorten	shout	shove
shovel	show	shun	shut	sidestep
sigh	signal	sip	sit	size
skid	skim	skip	skirt	slacken
slam	slap	slash	slay	slide
slug	smack	smear	smell	smuggle
snap	snare	snarl	snatch	snicker
sniff	snitch	snoop	snub	snuff
snuggle	soak	sock	soil	solve

spear	spell	spike	spin	splatter
split	spot	spray	spread	spring
sprint	spurn	spy	squeak	stack
stagger	stamp	stand	start	startle
steal	steer	step	stick	stiffen
stifle	stomp	stop	strangle	strap
strike	strip	stroke	struck	stub
study	stuff	stumble	stun	subdue
submerge	submit	suck	summarize	summon
supervise	supply	support	surrender	survey
suspend	swagger	swallow	swap	sway
swear	swerve	swim	swing	swipe
switch	synthesize	systematize	tackle	take
tap	target	taste	taunt	teach
tear	tease	telephone	terrorize	test
thrash	thread	threaten	throw	tickle
tie	tilt	tip	toss	touch
tout	track	train	transcribe	transfer
translate	trap	tread	treat	trip
trot	trounce	try	tuck	tug
tumble	turn	tutor	twist	type
understand	undertake	undo	undress	unfold
unify	unite	untangle	unwind	update
usher	utilize	vacate	vanish	vanquish
vault	vent	violate	wade	walk
wander	ward	watch	wave	wedge
weed	weigh	whack	whip	whirl

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Table 2.3 *(continued)*

whistle	wield	wiggle	withdraw	work
wreck	wrench	wrestle	write	yank
yell	yelp	yield	zap	zoom

Active Voice

In sentences with an action verb (see *Action Verbs*), the subject performs the verb's action.

> **Example:** John mailed the letter.

Because the subject (John) does the action (mails the letter), the sentence is said to be in the active voice.

When the subject is acted on by the verb, the sentence is said to be in the passive voice.

> **Example:** The letter was mailed by John.

For your business writing, you should emphasize the who or what that performs the action; that is, you should write using the active voice. The active voice is concise, easy to read, and clear. Always use the active voice for policies, procedures, and instructions.

> **Example:** You should review your emails before sending them.

Name the performer of the action to make it easier to identify the subject and avoid the passive voice.

> **Weak:** It was discovered by the students that their new teacher had been in the Marines.
>
> **Better:** The students discovered their teacher had been in the Marines.

A.D.

A.D. comes from the Latin phrase *anno Domini,* which means "in the year of the Lord." *A.D.* should be written in all caps with periods.

Adjectival Noun

An **adjectival noun** is an adjective that functions as a noun. Adjectival nouns are used to describe groups of people or things that share a common attribute.

Example: the poor, the rich, the young

Adjectival Opposites

Whenever you need to describe the opposite of an adjective, you can use an **antonym**. These opposite pairs of adjectives are called **adjectival opposites**. A thesaurus can help you find an appropriate antonym.

Example: The opposite of cold is hot.

Another way to form a negative adjective is with a prefix. Consider the following pairs:

- Fortunate, unfortunate
- Prudent, imprudent
- Considerate, inconsiderate
- Honorable, dishonorable
- Alcoholic, nonalcoholic
- Filed, misfiled

A third way to form an adjectival opposite is to combine the adjective with *less* or *least*.

Example: That is the least expensive building on the block.

Adjective Phrase

An **adjective phrase** is a group of words used as an adjective in a sentence.

Example: The CEO is <u>fond of classic rock</u> [adjective phrase].

An adjective phrase can often include an adverb such as *very* or *extremely*.

Example: The status report is very late.

Example: My little brother is extremely afraid of the dark.

See *Adjectives*.

Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe or modify a person, place, or thing.

Example: tall, solid, cold, green

Articles such as *a, an,* and *the* are adjectives.

A group of words containing a subject and verb may act as an adjective. Such a group is called an **adjective clause**.

Example: My best friend, <u>who is much older than I am</u> [adjective clause], is a doctor.

If the subject and verb are removed from an adjective clause, what's left is an **adjective phrase**.

Example: He is the man ~~who is~~ <u>keeping me employed</u> [adjective phrase, once "who is" is removed].

Placement of Adjectives in a Sentence

Adjectives almost always appear immediately before the noun or noun phrase that they modify. Sometimes adjectives appear in a string; when they do, they must appear in a particular order according to category.

Adjectives appear in the following order:

1. Determiners—articles and other limiters

    Example: a, an, five, her, our, those, that, several, some

2. Observation—postdeterminers and limiter adjectives and adjectives subject to subjective measure

    Example: beautiful, expensive, gorgeous, dilapidated, delicious

3. Size and shape—adjectives subject to objective measure

    Example: big, little, enormous, long, short, square

4. Age—adjectives describing age

    Example: old, antique, new, young

5. Color—adjectives denoting color

    Example: red, white, black

6. Origin—adjectives denoting the source of the noun

    Example: American, French, Canadian

7. Material—adjectives describing what something is made of

    Example: silk, wooden, silver, metallic

8. Qualifier—final limiter that is often part of the noun

    Example: rocking chair, hunting cabin, passenger car, book cover

    Example: an expensive, square, antique, black, French, wooden chinaware closet

When indefinite pronouns—such as *something, someone,* and *anybody*—are modified by an adjective, the adjective comes after the pronoun.

Example: That is something useful to know.

Use of Multiple Adjectives

Multiple adjectives of the same class are called **coordinated adjectives** and require a comma between them in a sentence. Consider whether you could have inserted *and* or *but* between the adjectives. If so, then use a comma between them.

Example: inexpensive but comfortable car. [If the *but* were not in the sentence, you would punctuate it as "inexpensive, comfortable car."]

Degrees of Adjectives

Adjectives can express degrees of modification: positive, comparative, and superlative. Use the **positive** form when no comparisons are being made.

Positive form example: rich, lovely, beautiful

Use the **comparative** for comparing two things. Sometimes the word *than* accompanies the comparable adjective.

Comparable form example: richer, lovelier than, more beautiful

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Use the **superlative** for comparing three or more things. Sometimes the word *the* precedes the superlative adjective.

Superlative form example: richest, the loveliest

The inflected suffixes *-er* and *-est* are used to form most comparative and superlative adjectives. Sometimes the suffixes *-ier* and *-iest* are added when a two-syllable adjective ends in *y.*

Example: friendlier, laziest

Be careful not to use the word *more* along with a comparative adjective formed with the *-er* suffix, or the word *most* along with a superlative adjective formed with the *-est* suffix.

Incorrect: more larger, most largest

Correct: larger, largest

Be careful not to form comparative or superlative adjectives that already describe a unique condition or extreme of comparison. *Perfec*t and *pregnant* are good examples.

Incorrect: most perfect, more unique

Correct: perfect, unique

Irregular Form Adjectives

Some adjectives have irregular forms in the comparative and superlative degree, as seen in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Irregular Comparative and Superlative Degree Forms

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
much, many, some	more	most
far	further	furthest

A-Adjectives

The so-called **a-adjectives** all begin with the letter *a*.

Example: ablaze, afloat, afraid, aghast, alert, alike, alive, alone, aloof, ashamed, asleep, averse, awake, aware

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These adjectives are used after a linking verb.

Example: The man was ashamed.

Sometimes you can use an a-adjective before the word it modifies.

Example: the alert driver

A-adjectives are sometimes modified with *very much*.

Example: The man was very much ashamed.

Adjuncts, Disjuncts, and Conjuncts

When adverbs are integrated into the flow of a sentence, the adverb is an **adjunct**.

Example: Rebeccca, I don't <u>really</u> [adjunct adverb] care.

When an adverb does not fit into the sentence flow, it is said to be d**isjunctive**.

Disjunctive adverbs are usually set off by a comma or a series of commas. A disjunctive adverb acts as if it is evaluating the rest of the sentence.

Example: <u>Honestly</u> [disjunctive or conjunctive adverb], Rebecca, I don't really care.

Conjunctive adverbs serve as a connector within the flow of the text, signaling a transition.

Example: If they start talking sports, <u>then</u> [conjunctive adverb] I'm leaving.

Adverbial conjunctions are words like *however* and *nevertheless*.

Example: I love this town; <u>however</u>, I don't think I can afford to live here.

Adverbial Clause

A group of words containing a subject and a verb act as an adverb (modifying another verb in the sentence); this is called an **adverbial clause**.

Example: <u>When this conference is over</u> [adverbial clause], we're going home for dinner.

Adverbial Phrase

An **adverbial phrase** is a group of words that act as an adverb in a sentence.

Example: Our departmental budgets were due <u>in October last year</u> [adverbial phrase].

Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or another adverb. Adverbs often describe when, where, why, or under what circumstances something happened.

There are five main types of adverbs:

- Adverbs of manner

  Example: She spoke <u>slowly</u> and walked <u>quietly</u> [two adverbs of manner].

- Adverbs of place

  Example: She lives <u>there</u> [place] now.

- Adverbs of frequency

  Example: She drives to work <u>daily</u> [frequency].

■ Adverbs of time

Example: She slept <u>late</u> [time].

■ Adverbs of purpose

Example: She broke the window <u>intentionally</u> [purpose].

Adverbs usually end in *-ly;* however, many words not ending in *-ly* can serve as adverbs.

Example: She drove <u>fast.</u> … He bowled the <u>worst</u> of us.

Some words that end in *-ly* are not adverbs.

Example: *Lovely, lonely, early, motherly,* and *friendly* are adjectives.

A small group of adverbs have two forms: those that end in *-ly* and those that don't. In some cases, the two forms have different meanings.

Example: They departed <u>late</u>.

Example: <u>Lately</u>, they can't seem to arrive on time.

In most cases, the form without the *-ly* should be reserved for casual conversation and not business writing.

Casual example: He did her wrong.

Business writing example: He treated her poorly.

Adverbs can modify adjectives, although adjectives can't modify adverbs.

Example: The executive showed a <u>wonderfully</u> casual attitude.

Adverbs can have comparative and superlative forms.

Comparative example: You should walk <u>faster</u> if you want to get some exercise.

Superlative example: The candidate who types <u>fastest</u> gets the job.

Sometimes words like *more* and *most, less* and *least* are used to indicate the comparative or superlative forms.

Example: The house was the <u>most beautifully</u> decorated home on the tour.

Example: Her soup was <u>less tastily</u> seasoned than the others.

Another construction used to create adverbs is the use of *as-as*.

Example: He can't read <u>as</u> fast <u>as</u> his cubical mate.

Adverbs are often used as intensifiers to convey a greater or lesser meaning. Intensifiers have three functions:

■ Emphasize

Example: I <u>really</u> [intensifier] don't like him. He <u>simply</u> ignores me.

■ Amplify

Example: He <u>completely</u> wrecked his new car. … I <u>absolutely</u> love fresh fruit.

■ Tone down

Example: I <u>kind of</u> like this restaurant's food. … She <u>mildly</u> disapproved of his smoking.

Prepositional Phrases Acting as Adverbs

Prepositional phrases frequently function as an adverb.

Example: She works <u>on weekends</u> [prepositional phrase].

Infinitive Phrases Acting as Adverbs

An infinitive phrase can act as an adverb.

Example: The assistant ran <u>to catch the bus</u> [infinitive phrase].

Adverbs in a Numbered List

When you create a numbered list, do not use adverbs with an *-ly* ending (*secondly, thirdly,* etc.). Instead, use *first, second, third,* and so on.

Adverbs to Avoid

Adverbs like *very, extremely,* and *really* don't intensify anything. They are often too imprecise for business writing.

Positioning Adverbs in a Sentence

Adverbs have the unique ability to be placed in different places within a sentence. Adverbs of manner are unusually flexible about where they are located:

Example: <u>Solemnly</u> [adverb] the president returned the salute.

Example: The president <u>solemnly</u> returned the salute.

Example: The president returned the salute <u>solemnly.</u>

Adverbs of frequency should appear at specific points in a sentence:

■ Before the main verb

Example: He <u>never</u> gets up before noon.

- Between the auxiliary verb and the main verb

Example: I have <u>rarely</u> called my sister without a good reason.

- Before the verb *used to*

Example: I <u>always</u> used to talk to him on the phone.

Indefinite adverbs of time can appear either before the verb or between the auxiliary and the main verb:

Example: He <u>finally</u> showed up for the meeting.

Example: He has <u>recently</u> traveled to India.

The adverb *too* usually comes before adjectives and other adverbs.

Example: He ate <u>too</u> fast. … He eats <u>too</u> quickly.

When *too* appears in a sentence after an adverb, it is a disjunct and is set apart with a comma.

Example: Linda works hard. She works quickly, <u>too</u>.

The adverb *too* and another adverb are sometimes followed by an infinitive verb.

Example: He talks <u>too slowly</u> to keep my attention.

The adverb *too* can also be followed by the prepositional phrase *for* plus the objective of the preposition plus an infinitive.

Example: This food is <u>too</u> spicy <u>for</u> Martha <u>to eat</u>.

Order of Adverbs

When a sentence contains more than one adverb, the adverbs should appear in a certain order. Shorter adverbial phrases should precede longer ones. The more specific phrase should go first.

Table 2.5 shows the correct order for adverbs.

Table 2.5 Correct Order of Adverbs

Noun/Verb	Manner	Place	Frequency	Time	Purpose
Horace jogs	enthusias-tically	in the park	every morning	before sunrise	to keep in shape.
Margaret drives	hurriedly	into town	every afternoon	before dinner	to do her shopping.

Inappropriate Adverb Order

Modifiers can sometimes attach themselves to the wrong word.

Example: They reported that M. B. Wilwau had won the lottery <u>on the evening news</u> [misplaced adverbial phrase].

Move the modifier immediately after the verb it is modifying (*reported*) or to the beginning of the sentence.

Example: They reported on the evening news that M. B. Wilwau had won the lottery.

Alternative example: On the evening news, they reported that M. B. Wilwau had won the lottery.

The adverbs *only* and *barely* are often misplaced modifiers.

Unclear: He <u>only</u> grew to be five feet tall.

Clearer: He grew to be <u>only</u> five feet tall.

Viewpoint Adverbs

A **viewpoint adverb** usually comes after a noun and is related to an adjective that precedes the noun.

Example: Investing all our money in technology stocks was probably not a good idea <u>financially</u>.

Focus Adverbs

A **focus adverb** is used to limit a specific aspect of the sentence.

Example: He got a promotion <u>just</u> for being there.

Negative Adverbs

Negative adverbs can create a negative meaning in a sentence without the use of words like *no, not, neither, nor,* or *never.*

Example: He <u>seldom</u> smiles.

Example: He <u>hardly</u> eats anything since he got sick.

Advice, Advise

Advice is a noun that means an opinion offered by someone suggesting how you should act or respond.

Example: I always talked to my uncle, whenever I wanted advice about business.

Advise is a verb that means to provide information or guidance.

Example: I advise my students to keep a dictionary handy whenever they are writing.

Affect, Effect

Affect is commonly used as a verb, meaning to influence. *Affect* can be used as a noun only as a psychological term, meaning feeling or emotion.

Effect is a verb meaning to bring about. It is also used as a noun, meaning a result or consequence, or a mental impression.

Incorrect: The light effects my vision.

Correct: The light affects my vision.

Incorrect: Can you affect a change in the operation?

Correct: Can you effect a change in the operation?

Affixes

An **affix** consists of one or more letters added to a word to change its meaning. There are two types of affixes:

■ Prefix—added to the beginning of a word

Example: im + possible = impossible

■ Suffix—added to the end of the word

   ■ Adding *-ly* to the end of some adjectives creates an adverb.

Example: wonderful + -ly = wonderfully

African-American

African-American is a term used to describe Americans of African descent. It is traditional to hyphenate African-American, but the hyphen is optional. Always use a hyphen if the term is being used as an adjective.

Example: He was an African American who idolized African-American business leaders.

Age

When giving the age of a person or a period of time, write out up to and including one hundred; use figures over one hundred:

Example: She is twelve years old.

Example: He has held the same position for twenty-six years.

Example: She is now 105 years of age.

Example: The company has been in this city for 102 years.

For compound adjectives denoting age, the words designating time may be used before *old,* but in that event the words *year* and *day* must appear in the singular:

Example: twelve-day-old baby elephant

Example: six-month-old pony

Example: 200-year-old building

Example: three-day-old kitten

Agents

The person or thing that performs the action described by a verb is called an **agent**. Agents are often used when writing in the passive voice along with the word *by*.

Example: The doctor's career was ruined by the lawsuit. [In this example, the *lawsuit* is the agent because it performed the act that ruined the doctor's career.]

Agreement

When the elements of a sentence have a grammatical relationship that affects the form of one or more of the words, **agreement** occurs.

Example: four boys [The word *four* requires the form of the word *boy* to become the plural *boys*.]

Agreement is also known as *concord.*

Aid, Aide

Both *aid* and *aide* mean helper or assistant. *Aide* comes from *aide-de-camp,* a military title. Use this form to describe people who serve as assistants.

Example: a congressional aide

Aid is often used for helpful objects.

Example: job aid, hearing aid, visual aid

Alike

See *Both, Alike*.

A Little

See *Little, A Little*.

Allegories

An **allegory** is a narrative that symbolically suggests something else. An allegory is an extended metaphor with two meanings. The underlying meaning of an allegory usually has moral or social significance.

Famous allegories are:

- *Aesop's Fables*

- *The Republic* by Plato

- *The Book of Revelation* from the Bible

- *The Masque of the Red Death* by Edgar Allan Poe

- *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

- *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis

Alliteration

Alliteration is a narrative technique that uses words beginning with the same letter to sound poetic.

Example: "The moan of doves in immemorial elms, and the murmuring of innumerable bees."—Tennyson

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All Right, Alright

All right means okay, acceptable, or unhurt. Always spell *all right* as two words, never one. *Alright* is an informal way to spell *all right* and should not be used in formal business writing.

Incorrect: It will be alright if you wish to go.

Correct: It will be all right if you wish to go.

Allusion, Illusion

An **allusion** is a reference to something. The words *allude* or *alluded* are more commonly used in writing. Allusions are often literary in nature.

Example: His allusion to water in his writing foreshadowed the great flood that would appear at the end of the book.

An *illusion* is a mirage, hallucination, or magic trick.

> **Example:** The performance involved the illusion of sawing a woman in half.

Alone, Lonely

Alone can function as an adjective or adverb. *Alone* means to be without other people or to be on your own.

> **Example:** Roger likes living alone.

> **Example:** The child was left alone in the house.

Lonely is an adjective that means being unhappy because you are alone. Just being *alone* does not make a person lonely.

> **Example:** Marcia felt lonely after her husband passed away.

A Lot, Alot, Allot

A lot, meaning a large amount or number, may be used to modify a noun. Using the word *man*y or *numerous* instead of *a lot* is better form.

> **Example:** We'll need a lot of hands to finish clearing the land.
>
> **Better:** We'll need many hands to finish clearing the land.

A lot can also be used as an adverb to mean very much or very often.

> **Example:** She looks a lot like her mother.

Alot is not a word.

Allot is a verb that means to give or share for a particular purpose.

> **Example:** We were allotted one pillow and blanket per person.

Already, All Ready

Already denotes time and means before the present time or earlier than expected. *All ready* denotes preparation and means completely ready.

Example: She had already arrived.

Example: We are all ready to leave.

Altogether, All Together

Altogether is an adverb that means completely, in total, quite, or in all. *All together* is an adverb that means in one place or together as one group.

Example: She is altogether pleasant.

Example: His bills came to fifty-seven dollars altogether.

Example: The books were all together on one shelf.

Ambitransitive Verbs

An **ambitransitive verb** can be both transitive and intransitive without changing the verb form.

Example: I read the book. [*Read* is transitive and *the book* is the direct object.]

Example: I always read in the den. (*Read* is intransitive and there is no direct object after the verb.)

Other ambitransitive verbs are:

■ Broke

Example: I broke the mirror. [transitive]

Example: The mirror broke. [intransitive]

■ Change

Example: I changed my pants. [transitive]

Example: The pants were changed. [intransitive]

■ Sunk

Example: I sunk the sailboat. [transitive]

Example: The sailboat sunk. [intransitive]

American English, British English

Certain words are spelled differently in **American English** than in **British English**. Table 2.6 is a list of words that have this peculiar treatment.

Table 2.6 Differences Between American and British Spellings

American	British
humor	humour
honor	honour
endeavor	endeavour
center	centre
fiber	fibre
theater	theatre
analyze	analyse
paralyze	paralyse

burned	burnt
dreamed	dreamt
spoiled	spoilt
canceled	cancelled
worshiping	worshipping
acknowledgment	acknowledgement
aging	ageing
usable	useable
anesthetic	anaesthetic
fetus	foetus
maneuver	manoeuvre
encyclopedia	encyclopaedia
catalog	catalogue
dialog	dialogue
check	cheque
draft	draught
plow	plough
program	programme

Among, Between

See *Between, Among*.

Ampersand

The **ampersand (&)** means "and." Do not use the ampersand in text, titles, or headings.

A.M., P.M.

A.M. means *ante meridiem,* which is Latin for "before midday." It stands for the time after midnight and before noon. *P.M.* means *post meridiem,* which is Latin for "after midday." It stands for the time after noon and before midnight.

When using *A.M.* or *P.M.*:

■ Don't write "12 A.M." or "12 P.M."; these forms cause confusion. Instead, write "12 noon" or "12 midnight."

■ You can use upper or lower case and periods: A.M. and P.M, or a.m. and p.m.

■ Do not add the word *o'clock* when writing times and including A.M. or P.M.

An

See *A, An.*

Anadiplosis

Anadiplosis is a narrative and speechwriting technique where a word or phrase at the end of a sentence or phrase is repeated at the beginning of the next sentence or phrase.

> **Example:** Here, we expect commitment. Commitment is the key to being successful in this business.

Anaphora

Anaphora refers to the use of words or phrases such as pronouns that point backward to something earlier in a sentence.

> **Example:** He wanted the newspaper and asked me to finish reading <u>it</u> [anaphoric, refers to the noun "newspaper"].

And Also

And also is a redundant phrase. Use either word separately, but not the two together.

And/0r

And/or is a legal term that means you can choose between two alternatives or choose both. Use *and/or* sparingly in your business writing because it is often seen as jargon. Check to make sure a simple *or* would do in your sentence. If choosing one of the alternatives eliminates the other, then it isn't an *and/or* situation.

Angry, Mad

See *Mad, Angry.*

Animate Nouns

Animate nouns refer to people, animals, and living things. **Inanimate nouns** refer to nonliving things.

Antagonyms

Antagonyms are words that can mean the opposite of themselves. Antagonyms are also known as **contranyms** or **autoantonyms**. The following are some examples of antagonyms:

■   Clip

Example: <u>Clip</u> [attach] the receipts to your expense report.

Example: <u>Clip</u> [cut from] the hedges.

■   Left

Example: How much time is <u>left</u> [remaining]?

Example: They have already <u>left</u> [have gone].

■ Bound

Example: I'm <u>bound</u> [moving toward] for Los Angeles.

Example: The criminal was <u>bound</u> [unable to move] with handcuffs.

■ Buckle

Example: You had better <u>buckle</u> [hold together] your seatbelt.

Example: Her knees <u>buckled</u> [collapsed] under the weight.

■ Cut

Example: Those kids <u>cut</u> [got into] in line.

Example: Those kids <u>cut</u> [got out of] class.

■ Dust

Example: The maid is going to <u>dust</u> [remove dust] the living room.

Example: The police are going to <u>dust</u> [apply dust] for fingerprints.

■ Citation

Example: The city council gave me a <u>citation</u> [an award] for my volunteer efforts in the community.

Example: The police gave me a <u>citation</u> [a penalty] for speeding.

Antecedent

An **antecedent** is a word, phrase, or clause referred to by a pronoun. In a series of sentences, the antecedent is understood after being referenced once in a sentence or previous sentence, and therefore a pronoun is used to avoid repetition.

In the following example, the antecedent and pronoun are underlined.

> **Example:** The _Titanic_ was lost on its maiden voyage. <u>It</u> was said to be unsinkable.

Third-person pronouns (_he, she, it, they_) need an antecedent to be clear. First-person pronouns like _I_ and _you_ do not.

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in three ways:

- Person—It must specify a particular person.

- Number—It must distinguish between singular and plural.

- Gender—It must distinguish between masculine and feminine.

Anti-

The prefix _anti-_ comes from Greek and means against. _Anti-_ is often added to words to create new words that mean the opposite of the original word.

> **Example:** anticrime, antisocial, antiglare

Antimetabole

Antimetabole is a technique where a word or phrase in one clause or phrase is repeated in the opposite order in the next clause or phrase.

> **Example:** "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."—John F. Kennedy

> **Example:** "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."—Jesus (Mark 2:27)

> **Example:** "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." —Winston Churchill

Antonyms

A word that means the opposite of another word is an **antonym**.

> **Example:** Hot is the antonym of cold.

Antonyms can be made by adding the prefix *un-*.

> **Example:** able, unable; happy, unhappy; suitable, unsuitable; likely, unlikely

Antonyms can be made by adding the prefix *non-*.

> **Example:** sense, nonsense; conformist, nonconformist

Antonyms can be made by adding the prefix *in-*.

> **Example:** sensitive, insensitive; discreet, indiscreet

Any, Either

Any refers to one of several. *Either* refers to one of two.

> **Correct:** You may have any of the six books.

> **Correct:** Either of those two cars will be acceptable.

Any, Some

Any and *some* are used to talk about indefinite quantities. Use *some* for positive statements and *any* for negative statements and questions.

Example: I asked the waiter to get me some water.

Example: Do you have any water?

Example: They don't have any.

Apart, A Part

Apart is an adverb that means separated by distance or time.

Example: I feel sad when we're apart.

A part is a noun that means a piece of something.

Example: I'd like to be a part of your team.

Apodosis

The main clause in a condition sentence is called an **apodosis**.

Example: If you ate there, you'd know what I mean. [The apodosis is "you'd know what I mean," and "if you ate there" is the if clause.]

Apostrophe

An **apostrophe (')** may denote that a word has been contracted intentionally.

Example: It's time to go.

Example: Haven't you finished the task?

An apostrophe can be used to show possession.

■   To show possession for a singular noun, add *'s*.

Example: the office's conference room

■   To show possession for a plural noun ending in *s*, add the apostrophe after the *s*.

Example: the employees' parking lot

■   To show possession for plural nouns not ending in *s,* add *'s*.

Example: men's room

The plural of compound nouns and joint possessive nouns is formed by adding *'s* to the second word only.

Example: Hitesh and Kalpana's house

If the items are separately owned, add *'s* to each of the compound nouns.

Example: Mary's and John's coats

For a proper name ending in *s,* use *'s*.

Example: Lewis's hat

Example: Miss Bliss's book

Note: Two proper names are traditionally observed as exceptions:

■   Moses' robe

■   Jesus' parable

For plural proper names ending in *s*, use only an apostrophe.

Example: The Joneses' boots were left in the hall.

No apostrophe is used with possessive pronouns.

Example: his, hers, its, yours, ours, theirs

The apostrophe is also used to express duration of time.

Example: a day's drive

Example: a year's worth of happiness

Appears, Displays

When writing about computer software, keep in mind that the word *displays* requires a direct object, while *appears* does not require a direct object.

Incorrect: The log-on screen displays.

Correct: The log-on screen appears.

Correct: The screen displays a warning message if you enter an incorrect password.

Appendix

An **appendix** is a separate section at the end of a document that provides supplementary information. An appendix provides additional reference material and details that were not necessary for all readers of the main document.

Example: statistics, detailed procedures, maps, diagrams

Documents can have more than one appendix, each containing a different type of information. Each appendix is labeled Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and so forth. When there is just one appendix in a document, title it Appendix.

If appendix items are referred to in the main document, arrange them in the same order as they are mentioned in the text.

Appendices should appear in the document's table of contents.

Apposition

An **apposition** is a writing technique that involves placing a noun or noun phrase next to another that explains it.

Example: John Sullivan, <u>the mayor</u> [in apposition, explaining who John Sullivan is], will be visiting the high school on Wednesday.

Appositives

An **appositive** is a noun or phrase that renames or amplifies a word that immediately precedes it.

Example: Gary, <u>my brother</u> [appositive], is a psychologist.

An **appositive phrase** renames or amplifies a word that immediately precedes it. Use commas to separate the nonessential appositive from the rest of the sentence.

Example: My favorite professor, <u>a world famous author</u> [nonessential appositive], just won a prestigious literary award.

Be careful about the case of an appositive. Check the case by substituting the noun that the appositive modifies.

Incorrect: My manager gave two of us, Ted and I, a bonus for our participation in the diversity task force.

Check: My manager gave I a bonus.

Correct: My manager gave two of us, Ted and me, a bonus for our participation in the diversity task force.

Check: My manager gave me a bonus.

Articles

Articles, determiners, and **quantifiers** are little words that precede and modify nouns.

Example: the dog, a cat, those people, whatever purpose, either way, your choice

---

Sometimes these words tell you whether the subject is something specific or more general. Sometimes they tell you how much or how many.

The following is a list of determiner categories:

- Articles—*an, a, the*

- Determiners—articles and other limiters such as *a, an, five, her, our, those, that, several, some*

- Possessive nouns—*Kevin's,* the *worker's*, my *mother's*

- Possessive pronouns—*his, your, their, whose*

- Numbers—*one, two, three,* etc.

- Demonstrative pronouns—*this, that, these, those, such*

The three articles *a, an,* and *the* are a type of adjective. *The* is called the definite article because it tends to name something specific. *A* and *an* are called indefinite articles, because they refer to things in a less specific way. *The* is used with specific nouns and is required when the noun refers to something unique.

Example: The earth orbits the sun.

The is also used for abstract nouns.

Example: The City of Atlanta has encouraged the use of mass transit.

A is used before singular nouns that begin with consonants.

Example: a dog, a cat, a mountain

An is used before singular nouns that begin with vowels or vowel-like sounds.

Example: an apple, an eagle, an invitation.

As, Like

See *Like, As.*

Assure, Insure, Ensure

See *Ensure, Assure, Insure.*

Asterisks

Asterisks are used to call out a footnote on a page. The following are some uses for asterisks in your writing:

- Three spaced asterisks centered on a page may be used to signal a change in thought.

- One or more asterisks are sometimes used to strike out letters when writing profanity.

- Asterisks are sometimes used as bullets when creating a list.

- In computer science, an asterisk is used to represent a wildcard character.

- In telephony, an asterisk is included on the telephone keypad and is referred to as "star."

As to Whether

Avoid using the phrase *as to whether*. The word *whether* usually suffices.

As Well As

As well as is a synonym for *in addition to* and for the word *and*. Avoid using *as well as* in business documents. Instead use *in addition to* or *and*.

Correct: With the new printer, you can print beautiful color photographs in addition to normal black-and-white text documents.

Avoid: With the new printer, you can print beautiful color photographs as well as normal black-and-white text documents.

Autoantonyms

See *Antagonyms*.

Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are used to form verb phrases. There are four auxiliary verb groups:

- To be

- To have

- Model auxiliaries

- To do

The auxiliary verb *to be* is used in both the progressive tense and the passive voice.

Example of progressive tense: You are hitting.

Example of passive voice: You are hit.

The auxiliary verb *to have* is used in the perfect tense.

Example: I have finished my dinner.

Example: I had finished my dinner.

Example: I have been finished with my dinner.

Model auxiliaries determine whether a verb is a fact, desire, possibility, or command.

Example of fact: I can walk.

Example of command: I must walk.

Example of desire: I should walk.

Example of possibility: I may walk.

The auxiliary verb *to do* is used in questions, negatives, or emphatic statements.

Example of question: Does he smoke?

Example of negative: He smokes, doesn't he?

Example of emphasis: Despite the fact he's coughing, he does smoke.

Average, Mean, Median

Average is a mathematical term that is determined by adding two or more numbers together and dividing the sum by the number of items.

Example: The average of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 is 6. [2 + 4 + 6 + 8 + 10 = 30, 30 ÷ 5 = 6]

Average is also known mathematically as the arithmetic mean. The middle number in a series of numbers is the *median*.

Example: The median of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 is 6.

A While, Awhile

A while is a period of time. *Awhile* is an adverb that means for a time and should never be used as the object of a preposition (which can only be a noun or pronoun).

Incorrect: Please come to my home for awhile before you start your journey.

Correct: Please come to my home for a while before you start your journey.

Correct: Relax awhile before you begin the task.

Awful, Awfully

Awful can mean extremely disagreeable or exceedingly great.

Example: It was an <u>awful</u> experience. It was an <u>awful</u> lot of money.

Never use *awful* or *awfully* as a synonym for very.

Incorrect: She performed an awfully difficult task.

Correct: She performed a very difficult task.

Incorrect: Bill is awfully smart.

Correct: Bill is very smart.

B

Bad, Badly

Bad is an adjective and *badly* is an adverb. Use the adjective *bad* when referring to human feeling.

> **Example:** I felt bad. [If you said, "I felt badly," you'd be saying that there was something wrong with your sense of touch.]

Badly is an adverb, but it is often mistakenly used as an adjective.

> I**ncorrect:** He wanted badly to go with them.
>
> **Correct:** He wanted very much to go with them.

> **Incorrect:** She felt badly after her operation.
>
> **Correct:** She did not feel well after her operation.

Back-Channeling

In conversation, **back-channeling** is a natural response that shows you understand what a person is saying by using interjections such as *I see, yes, okay,* and *uh-huh*.

Backslash, Slash

The usual **slash** (/) is sometimes called a **forward slash**. Slashes are often used to indicate directories or folders in a computer filing system. Slashes are also used in Web addresses.

> **Example:** http://www.videologies.com

A backslash (\) is often used in computer programming languages and to indicate the directory structure of a computer hard drive.

Back up, Backup

When used as a verb to describe the action of backing up, *back up* is two words.

Example: It is important to back up your hard drive.

When used as an adjective or noun, *backup* is one word.

Example: I searched my collection of backup CDs in order to restore my hard drive.

Base Form of a Verb

The base form of a verb is the same as the infinitive form without *to*.

Example: wait, speak, come, see

Basically, Essentially, Totally

These words often add no additional meaning to a sentence and should be removed from your writing and speech.

B.C.

B.C. stands for *before Christ*. Some people use *B.C.E.*, which stands for *before the common era*.

B.C. is always written in all caps with periods.

Because, Since, As

Because is not to be used in place of *that*.

Incorrect: The reason he did not attend the company party is because he was in Chicago.

Correct: The reason he did not attend the company party is that he was in Chicago.

Better: He did not attend the company party because he was in Chicago.

Use *because* when referring to a reason for doing something. Use *since* when referring to a passage of time. Avoid using *as* referring to a reason for doing something. Use *because* instead.

Incorrect: As I forgot to get gas, my car stalled on the freeway.

Correct: Because I forgot to get gas, my car stalled on the freeway.

Correct: Since getting the new computer, I haven't had any problems with crashes.

Been, Gone

Been is the past participle of the word *be*. *Gone* is the past participle of the word *go*. *Been* is used to describe a past trip; a person has traveled somewhere and returned.

Example: Jennifer has been to India four times.

Gone is used to describe a trip from which a person has not returned.

Example: Jennifer has gone to India for the month of March.

Being That, Being As

Being that and *being as* are nonstandard substitutes for *because*.

Incorrect: Being that he was the only manager there on Saturday, everyone looked to him for answers when the network went down.

Correct: Because he was the only manager there on Saturday, everyone looked to him for answers when the network went down.

Below

See *Above, Below.*

Beside, Besides

Beside is a preposition that means close to or next to.

Example: The house is beside the river.

Example: He sat beside his girlfriend.

Besides can be a preposition that means in addition to or other than.

Example: What are you studying besides business administration?

Besides can be an adverb that means as well or furthermore.

Example: She was articulate and a strong leader. Besides, she was the owner's daughter.

Between, Among

Between is used to differentiate two, and only two, objects. *Among* is used to differentiate more than two.

Correct: The dog was sitting between John and me.

Correct: There were three good books among the many he gave me.

Bias, Biased

Bias is a noun used to describe a preference toward a particular ideology.

Example: His bias toward Hispanics prevented him from making friends with his new neighbors.

Biased is a verb used to describe an action or judgment influenced by prejudice.

Example: His vote on the jury was biased by his hatred for Hispanics.

Biased or Sexist Language

Avoid language that is stereotyped or biased in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or race. Stereotypical language assumes a stereotype about a particular group of people.

Incorrect: Although he was Jewish, he wasn't good with his finances.

Correct: He wasn't good with his finances.

Nonsexist writing is essential for most audiences.

Incorrect: He provides a great service to mankind.

Correct: He provides a great service to humanity.

Incorrect: Landing on the moon was one of man's greatest achievements.

Correct: Landing on the moon was one of humanity's greatest achievements.

Incorrect: The common man doesn't care anything about politics.

Correct: The average person doesn't care anything about politics.

Incorrect: We need to man the ticket booth.

Correct: We need to staff the ticket booth.

Avoid the use of *man* when describing various occupations.

Incorrect: businessman

Correct: businessperson

Incorrect: fireman

Correct: firefighter

Incorrect: mailman

Correct: mail carrier

Incorrect: stewardess

Correct: flight attendant

Incorrect: policeman

Correct: police officer

Incorrect: male nurse

Correct: nurse

Bibliography

A **bibliography** is a listing of books, magazines, Internet sources, and other reference materials used in writing a document. Bibliographies are located at the end of a document.

A bibliography is normally alphabetized by author's last name. If the author's name is unknown, alphabetize by title.

A bibliography is different from a series of footnotes. Footnotes are used to site references used in the text and are listed at the bottom of the page. See *Footnotes, Endnotes.*

For printed materials, a bibliography should contain the:

■ Author's name.

■ Title of the publication or title of the magazine article.

■ Place of publication.

■ Publishing company.

■ Publication date.

■ Volume number of a magazine.

■ Page number(s).

> **Example of book:** Wilson, Kevin. *The AMA Handbook of Business Writing,* New York: AMACOM Books, 2010: 50–51.

> **Example of journal article:** Wilson, Kevin. "Alaskan B-24 Finds Home in Utah." *Aviation History,* October 2011.

For Internet sources, a bibliography should contain the:

■ Author and editor names.

■ Title of the page.

■ Date of publication.

■ Date you viewed the page.

■ Web address.

Example: Wilson, Kevin. "Formatting a Bibliography." *Writing Toolkit.* http://www.videologies.com/amahandbook. 2010. Retrieved May 15, 2011.

Billion

A *billion* is equal to a thousand millions (1,000,000,000). You can write the number in words or numbers:

Example: five billion dollars, $5 billion

Biweekly, Bimonthly, Semiweekly, Semimonthly

To use these terms correctly, consider the following definitions:

- *Biweekly* means that something occurs every two weeks.

- *Semiweekly* means that something occurs twice in one week.

- *Bimonthly* means that something occurs every two months.

- *Semimonthly* means that something occurs twice in one month.

Blind

See *Visually Impaired, Blind.*

Blog, Weblog

Blog and *Weblog* are synonymous terms that describe Web-based journals. *Blog* can be both a noun and verb.

- *Blog* as a noun refers to the Web site where the content is published.

- *Blog* as a verb means to write articles for a blog.

Bold Fonts

Bold fonts are often used to identify key terms or phrases when writing technical documents or manuals. Consider the following tips for using bold fonts:

- Use bold fonts for emphasis to make certain words or phrases stand out.

- Use bold fonts for headlines and headings in your documents.

- In procedural documents, use bold fonts for warning or caution messages.

- Don't add bold to an entire paragraph of text.

- Use the bold font version of the typeface rather than the bold style function (the bold button) of your software. Use the bold style function only as a last resort if there is no bold typeface for the font you are using.

Bored, Boring

Bored is an adjective that describes when someone is uninterested, unhappy, or unoccupied.

Example: He was so bored that he started reading the phone book.

Boring is an adjective that means something is not interesting or exciting.

Example: The seminar was so boring that he fell asleep.

Both, Alike

Don't use the combination *both alike*.

Incorrect: The cars are both alike.

Correct: The two cars are alike. They are both the latest model.

Both, Each

Both is used to describe a condition that applies to two entities. *Each* is used to describe a single entity.

Incorrect: There is a picture on both sides of the mantel.

Correct: There is a picture on each side of the mantel.

Brackets

Brackets and **parentheses** are sometimes used interchangeably.

Changes to Quoted Material

If you are quoting someone, but make a change to the quote for clarity, you should put your change within brackets. Consider the following:

Original quote: "Everyone knew it was about to break any day now."

Revised quote: "Everyone knew it [the dam] was about to break any day now."

Digressions Within Parentheses

Sometimes you will find situations where you need an extra set of parentheses nested within a previous pair.

Example: The computer's memory (random access memory [RAM] and read only memory [ROM]) is where software is loaded.

Brake, Break

A *brake* as a noun means a device that slows a vehicle.

Example: I had to push hard on the brake to stop.

Break can be a noun or a verb.

- ■ *Break* as a verb means to damage something.

    Example: He is going to break the chair.

- ■ *Break* as a noun means time off.

    Example: I want to go outside on my break.

Brand Names

Capitalize the brand names of products. Some common brand names like Kleenex, Xerox, and Band-Aid are trademarked brand names and should be capitalized. You do not need to use the symbols ® or ™ when writing brand names.

If the product is part of the brand name, then it is also capitalized.

Example: Wonder Classic White Bread

If the product is not part of the brand name, then the product is not capitalized.

Example: Listerine mouthwash

Breath, Breathe

Breath is a noun that describes the air passing into and out of our lungs.

Example: The yoga teacher asked us to focus on our breath.

Breathe is a verb meaning to take a breath.

Example: Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and relax.

Bring, Take

Bring is used to denote movement toward someone or something. *Take* is used to denote movement away from someone or something.

Example: Bring me the book.

Example: Take the book to him.

British English

See *American English, British English.*

Bulleted List

Bulleted lists draw attention to important information. Consider these tips for the use of bulleted lists:

- Use a numbered list for a sequence of events or ranking items in a list.

- Use bullet symbols or checkmarks when the items in the list are not sequential or ranked.

- Make all the entries grammatically parallel.

- Do not mix clauses and sentences when creating bullet points.

- If the bullet points are not complete sentences, they do not need end punctuation.

- Indent subtext bullets that provide additional details about a main bullet point.

Bushel

Add an *s* when referring to more than one bushel.

Incorrect: Eight bushel of oats.

Correct: Eight bushels of oats.

Business, Right

Don't use *business* when you really mean *right*.

Incorrect: What business is it of theirs to question my action?

Correct: What right have they to question my action?

Buzzwords

Buzzwords are popular overused words that are common in business environments. Buzzwords are often pretentious and difficult to understand. Avoid them in your business writing.

Some buzzwords may be appropriate in the right context:

Incorrect: We need to architect a software solution.

Correct: John is the architect on the building project.

Common buzzwords to avoid are shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 Common Buzzwords to Avoid

accountability	action items	architect	ballpark
benchmarking	best of breed	best practice	big picture
bleeding edge	bottom line	business case	buy-in
champion	cross-platform	customer-focused	deliverables
downsize	drill down	empowerment	enterprise-wide
fast track	front-end	game plan	globalize
goal-oriented	going forward	heads up	heavy lifting
herding cats	ideation	in the loop	in-market for
info superhighway	intellectual capital	key player	knowledge base
leading edge	lean and mean	level-set	leverage
long-term	low-risk/high-yield	matrix	methodology

mind-set	mission-critical	mission statement	monetize
multitasking	networking	on the same page	out-of-the-loop
out-of-the-box	outside the box	oxymoron	paradigm shift
partner	peel the onion	performance-based	play hardball
power shift	push the envelope	ramp up	reality check
re-engineer	resource-constrained	results-driven	right-size
risk management	ROI (return on investment)	rubber stamp	scalable
service organization	stand-alone	synergize	take that offline
talking points	task force	think outside the box	tip of the iceberg
total quality	touch base	touch points	train wreck
turnkey	24/7	user-centric	value-added
whiteboard	win-win	world-class	

By, Bye, Buy

By is a preposition and is commonly used in prepositional phrases.

Example: You should have learned that by now.

Bye is an abbreviated form of good-bye or a break in a sports team schedule.

Example: Because we had the best record, we got a bye for the first round of the tournament.

Buy can be both a noun and a verb. As a noun, *buy* means a very affordable purchase.

Example: The sweater was a great buy.

Buy as a verb means to make a purchase.

Example: I'm going to buy the sweater.

By, Until

By and *until* both indicate any time before, but not later than, a certain time.

Until is used to tell how long a situation continued.

Example: He lived in Austin until May 2010.

Until is often used in negative sentences.

Example: Tickets will not go on sale until January 15.

By is used when something will happen before or at a specific time. It is often used to indicate a deadline.

Example: You have to finish the project by December 31.

C

Call Back, Callback

Call back is two words when used as a verb.

Example: I need to call back two of the top candidates for the position.

Callback is one word when used as a noun or adjective.

Example: After the audition, Chaital hoped for a callback.

Call Out, Callout

Call out is two words when used as a verb.

Example: You should call out the processes in the diagram.

Callout is one word when used as a noun or adjective.

Example: The illustration had a callout created as a text box.

Callouts

Callouts are text labels in an illustration that point out specific items that should be noticed by the reader. (See Figure 2.1.) Consider the following tips for using callouts:

- Callouts should have the first letter capitalized.

- Do not capitalize callouts that start with an ellipsis (…).

- If the callout is a complete sentence, end it with a period.

■ Avoid a group of callouts for a single illustration where some are complete sentences and others are sentence fragments.

■ Make all the callouts consistent grammatically for a single illustration.

Figure 2.1 Illustration with Callouts
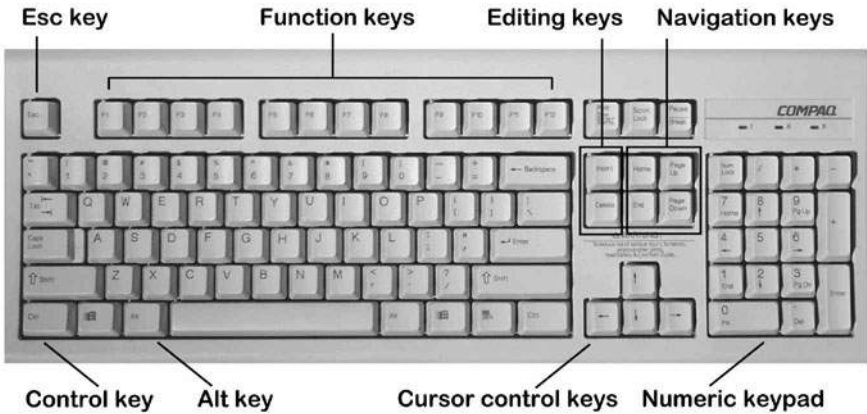
Came By

Came by is a colloquial phrase and should be avoided in business writing.

Incorrect: He came by to see me.

Correct: He came to see me.

Can, May

Use *can* to indicate capability.

Example: Can you read the bottom line on the eye chart?

Example: Yes, I can read it.

Use *may* to indicate possibility or when asking for permission.

Example: It may rain today.

Example: May I help you?

Cannot

Cannot is one word.

Incorrect: We can not make it to the performance.

Correct: We cannot make it to the performance.

Can't Seem

Seem is a verb that means look or appear. Using *can't* with *seem* is awkward.

Incorrect: I can't seem to make the journey in an hour.

Correct: It seems impossible for me to make the journey in one hour.

Canvas, Canvass

A *canvas* is a noun that means a heavy cloth that is, for example, stretched on a wood frame for painting or used to cover the floor of a boxing ring.

Example: The artist applied paint to the canvas.

Example: After the devastating punch, the unconscious boxer fell to the canvas.

Canvass is a verb meaning to survey.

Example: We went door-to-door to canvass voters.

Capital Letters

Capital letters are used at the beginning of a sentence or for a proper noun. Capital letters are also called **upper case**. See *Capitalization*.

Capital, Capitol

Capital can be a noun or an adjective. *Capital*:

- Can be the seat of government for a state or country.

- Can be an uppercase letter.

- Can be money or property owned by a business.

- Can be the top part of an architectural column.

- Can also mean "punishable by death."

  Example: Murder is a capital offense.

- Capital, as an adjective, means principal or chief.

  Example: It was the capital idea of the conference.

Capitol is the building where the U.S. Congress meets. It is capitalized when it refers to the U.S. Capitol. It is not capitalized when it refers to the main government building for a U.S. state.

Capitalization

Proper nouns that denote the names of specific persons or places are capitalized, though names that are common to a group are not. Consider the following *capitalization* guidelines:

Acts of Congress

- Civil Rights Act
- Taft-Hartley Act

- Child Labor Amendment

- Eighteenth Amendment

Associations

- Society of Professional Engineers

- American Business Association

- Young Women's Christian Association

- American Heart Association

Book Titles and Their Subdivisions

- *The American Way,* Chapter VI

- *Remembrance of Things Past,* Volume 11

- Bulletins and Periodical Titles

- *Wall Street Journal*

Railroad Cars and Automobile Models

- Car 54, Train 93

- Plymouth

- Cadillac

Churches and Church Dignitaries

- Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

- the Archbishop of New York

- Bishop John Barnes

Cities

- Jefferson City, Missouri

- Los Angeles

Clubs

- Leon Book Club

- The Do-Gooders

- Union League Club

- *But:* many Republican clubs in the West

Legal Codes

- the Code of Building Maintenance

- *But:* the building code

- Code VI

Compass Points Designating a Specific Region

- the Northeast [section of the country]

- the Pacific Northwest

- *But:* just drive north

- the West

- *But:* west of town

Constitutions

- the Constitution of Texas

- the Constitution of the United States

- *But:* the constitution of any nation

Corporations

- American Brake Corporation

- Container Corporation of America

- *But:* The corporation was dissolved.

Courts

- the Criminal Court of Appeals

- *But:* a court of appeals

- the Supreme Court

- the Magistrate's Court

- *But:* a county court

Decorations

- Purple Heart

- Good Conduct Medal

- Croix de Guerre

- *But:* Soldiers are given decorations to signal their acts of heroism.

Degrees (Academic)

- B.A.

- D.D.

- M.D.

- Ph.D.

Districts

- First Congressional District

- *But:* a congressional district

Educational Courses

- English 101

- Spanish Grammar

- Mathematics Made Easy

- *But:* He is studying physics and chemistry.

Epithets

- First Lady of the State
- Alexander the Great

Fleets

- the Third Fleet
- *But:* The ship was part of the fleet.

Foundations

- Carnegie Foundation
- Isha Foundation
- *But:* He established a foundation.

Geographic Divisions

- Lone Star State
- Sooner State
- *But:* There are fifty states in our country.
- Northern Hemisphere
- South Pole
- Old World Near East

Government Divisions

- Federal Reserve Board
- the Boston Fire Department
- *But:* The department was headed by Mr. Brian Wilson.

Historical Terms

- Dark Ages
- Renaissance

- Christian Era

- World War II

- Battle of the Bulge

- Declaration of Independence

- Magna Carta

Holidays

- Thanksgiving Day

- Passover

- Easter Sunday

- New Year's Eve

Libraries

- Library of Congress

- Albany Public Library

- *But:* The library is a source of information.

Localities

- Western Europe

- East Africa

- Wheat Belt

- West Side

- Mississippi Delta

Military Services

- United States Navy

- Signal Corps

- Second Battalion

- Company B
- Squadron 28

Nobility and Royalty

- Queen of Belgium
- *But:* Many queens were honored here.
- Duke of Windsor
- *But:* She was proud to have met a duke.

Oceans and Continents

- Pacific Ocean
- *But:* He was glad to be crossing the ocean.

Parks, Peoples, and Tribes

- Greenleaf Park
- Lake Texoma State Park
- Yellowstone National Park
- *But:* The park was in a southern state.
- Jews
- Christians
- Malay
- Chickasaw

Personification

- He was recognized by the Chair and spoke briefly.
- He sang about Summer in all its glory.
- *But:* In summer the days are longer.

Planets and Other Heavenly Bodies

- Mars

- Venus

- Big Dipper

Exceptions: moon, sun, stars

Rivers

- Mississippi River

- Wabash River

- *But:* The Mississippi and Wabash rivers were flooding after the torrential rains.

Sports Stadiums, Teams, and Terms

- Dallas Cowboys

- Madison Square Garden

- Super Bowl

- Dodgers

Captions

A **caption** is a short text message that appears below an illustration in a document that names and describes the image. A caption is usually placed directly below the illustration. Good captions pull a reader into the document.

A good caption should:

- Identify the subject of the illustration.

- Be short.

- Establish the relevance to the document.

Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers

Numerical symbols like 1, 2, 3 or numbers written as words like one, two, three are **cardinal numbers**.

Ordinal numbers express an order.

Example: first, second, third …

Case

Case is a grammatical term that refers to how nouns and pronouns are used with other words in a sentence. There are three cases:

- Subjective

- Objective

- Possessive

The **subjective** case is also called the **nominative** case. Subjective case includes:

- When a noun or pronoun is the subject of a sentence

    Example: I [pronoun] plan to go to India.

    Example: Mike [proper noun] sings in a band.

- When a predicate noun is used (a noun following a form of the *be* verb)

    Example: He is a singer [a predicate noun].

The **objective** case is used when the noun or pronoun is used in a sentence as a direct object, an indirect object, or the object of a preposition.

Example: Carl drew the picture [direct object].

Example: Jeff gave <u>us</u> [indirect object] the final presentation.

Example: Our team climbed up the <u>stairs</u> [objective of a preposition] together.

The **possessive** case is used to show ownership by a noun or pronoun.

Example: Paul washed <u>Nina's</u> [noun] clothes.

Example: Where did you find <u>her</u> [pronoun] clothes?

Table 2.8 provides a list of pronoun cases.

Table 2.8 Pronoun Cases

Subjective	Objective	Possessive
I	me	my, mine
you	you	your, yours
he	him	his
she	her	her, hers
it	it	its
we	us	our, ours
they	them	their, theirs

Cataphora

Cataphora is a writing technique that uses words or phrases such as pronouns to point forward to something later in the text.

Example: Since he was afraid of <u>it</u> [points forward to the noun "ocean"], John found it very difficult to go near the ocean.

Causative Verbs

Causative verbs are used to describe an action that is necessary to cause another action.

Example: My manager made me do it.

Other examples: let, make, help, allow, have, require, motivate, get, convince, hire, assist, encourage, permit, employ, force

---

Causative verbs are usually followed by an object (noun or pronoun) and an infinitive (*to* plus a verb).

Example: He <u>allows his staff to work from home</u> every Friday.

Three causative verbs do not follow this pattern: *have, make, let*. These verbs are usually followed by an object and the base form of the verb.

Example: She <u>made her clients read</u> the entire contract.

Caution Notice

See *Notices*.

CD, DVD

CD stands for compact disc. *CD-ROM* stands for compact disc, read-only memory. *DVD* stands for digital video disc. Do not add *disc* after CD or DVD.

Incorrect: Please give me the CD disc.

Correct: Please give me the DVD.

Censor, Censure, Sensor, Censer

Censor means to suppress someone's speech or writings to prevent them from being shared.

Example: The producer had to censor the interview by bleeping inappropriate language from the broadcast.

Censure means to denounce an offender.

Example: The lawyer who tampered with evidence was censured by the bar association.

A *sensor* is a device that detects changes in the environment.

Example: A motion sensor turns the light on when someone goes by.

A *censer* is an incense burner in a church.

Example: The priest swings the censer three times.

Champaign, Champagne

Champaign is a city and county in Illinois. *Champagne* is a type of sparkling wine and a region in France.

Check, Control

To *check* means to make certain something is correct, safe, or suitable by examining it.

Example: You should always check your wiper blades whenever you change your car's oil.

To *control* means to limit, order, instruct, or rule something or someone's actions.

Example: You need to control your dog while walking in the park.

Chiasmus

A **chiasmus** is a figure of speech created when two clauses use a reversal of structures. A chiasmus is often used to make a larger point.

Example: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair."—William Shakespeare

Chicano, Latino, Hispanic

To use these terms correctly in your writing, consider the following definitions:

- *Chicano* means Mexican-American.

- *Latino* means having Latin American heritage.

- *Hispanic* means having heritage from a Spanish-speaking country.

Choose, Chose

Choose is the present tense.

Example: Which one are you going to choose?

Chose is the past tense.

Example: I chose the purple one.

Cite, Site, Sight

To *cite* is a verb meaning to reference another person's words or writing.

Example: You cite the poet in your report.

A *site* is a noun meaning a location.

Example: That is the site of the car wreck.

Example: This is my Web site.

Sight can be a noun or a verb. As a noun, *sight* means the perception of something with your eyes, a view, or a glimpse.

Example: The ocean is in sight.

Sight as a verb means to see or to take notice.

Example: He sighted the enemy in his binoculars.

Citing Publications

Sources are often used in the creation of a new business document. Cited sources appear within the text and in a reference list at the end of the document.

■   Within the text, insert the last name of the author, a comma, and the publication date in parentheses.

Example: (Stroman, 2011)

■   For multiple authors, cite both names joined with an ampersand (&), a comma, and the publication date in parentheses.

Example: (Stroman & Wauson, 2011)

- If the name of the author is part of the text, cite only the missing information in parenthesis.

  Example: as reported by Stroman (2011)

- For citing works produced by an association, corporation, or government agency, the name of the group serves as the author.

  Example: (American Society for Training and Development, 2011)

- For citing works with no author, use the title of the book as the author.

  Example: (*The Urantia Book,* 1955)

Cite your sources in a reference list or bibliography at the end of the document. See *Bibliography.*

Clauses

A **clause** is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb but is not a complete sentence. A clause is different from a phrase because a phrase does not include a subject and a verb.

Cleanup, Clean Up

Cleanup is a noun that refers to a project or task involving cleaning.

Example: The oil spill resulted in a multimillion-dollar cleanup.

Clean up is a verb phrase that describes an action.

Example: You need to clean up your room before dinner.

Cleft Sentences

Cleft sentences are used to convert an original clause into two clauses to change the emphasis in the sentence.

Original clause: Mike ate the apple.

Cleft sentence: It was Mike who ate the apple. [puts the emphasis on Mike]

Cleft sentence: It was the apple that Mike ate. [puts the emphasis on the apple]

Clichés

Clichés are overused expressions that have become trite and even annoying. Avoid the clichés shown in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9 Common Clichés

acid test	at loose ends	babe in the woods
better late than never	black as night	blind as a bat
bolt from the blue	brought back to reality	busy as a bee (or beaver)
cat's meow	cool as a cucumber	cool, calm, and collected
crack of dawn	crushing blow	cry over spilt milk
dead as a doornail	dog-eat-dog world	don't count your chickens
dyed in the wool	easier said than done	easy as pie
face the music	feathered friends	flash in the pan
flat as a pancake	gentle as a lamb	go at it tooth and nail
good time was had by all	greased lightning	happy as a lark
head over heels	heavy as lead	horns of a dilemma
hour of need	keep a stiff upper lip	ladder of success
last but not least	looking a gift horse in the mouth	meaningful dialogue
moving experience	needle in a haystack	open-and-shut case
point with pride	pretty as a picture	put it in a nutshell
quick as a flash (or wink)	rat race	ripe old age

(continues)

Table 2.9 *(continued)*

rules the roost	sad but true	sadder but wiser
set the world on fire	sick as a dog	sigh of relief
slow as molasses	smart as a whip	sneaking suspicion
spread like wildfire	straight as an arrow	straw that broke the camel's back
strong as an ox	take the bull by the horns	thin as a rail
through thick and thin	tried but happy	to coin a phrase
to make a long story short	trial and error	tried and true
under the weather	white as a sheet	wise as an owl
work like a dog	worth its weight in gold	

Click

See *Press, Type, Click, Strike, Hit, Select,* and *Mouse Terminology.*

Click and Drag

See *Mouse Terminology.*

Click On

See *Mouse Terminology.*

Closed Compounds

See *Compound Words.*

Coleman-Liau Index

The **Coleman-Liau Index** is a readability test that is used to determine the grade level a student in the United States would need to be in order to read and understand a document. The index counts the number of characters in words.

The index is calculated using the following formula:

$$A - B = Index$$

where A = the number of characters divided by the number of words $\times$ 5.89 and B = the number of sentences in a fragment of words $\times$ 0.3.

Collective Adjectives

A **collective adjective** is formed when the article *the* is combined with an adjective describing a class or group of people. The resulting phrase can act as a noun.

Example: the meek, the rich, the poor

The difference between a collective noun and a collective adjective is that the collective adjective is always plural and requires a plural verb.

Example: The poor are always hungry.

Collective Nouns

A **collective noun** refers to people, animals, or objects as a group.

Example: The company [collective noun] has decided to expand internationally.

Example: I'm going to call the police [collective noun].

Collocations

Collocations are groups of words that are regularly used together in a certain order.

Example: hot and cold

Collocations are also word combinations that are common English sayings.

Example: middle management, nuclear family, heavy smoker, incredibly beautiful, wide awake

---

Colloquial

Colloquial is a term used to describe informal language that should not be used in formal speech or writing.

Example: ya'll, gonna, ain't, pop (for soft drink)

Colon

A **colon** generally follows a sentence introducing a list or a long quotation.

Example: The following quotation is from the *Atlanta Daily* newspaper: "Regardless of what may be accomplished, the company will still be involved."

Example: During your first year, you will study such subjects as these: algebra, physics, chemistry, and psychology.

Exception: When the list is the object of a verb or a preposition, a colon is never used:

Example: During your first year, you will study algebra, physics, chemistry, and psychology.

Emphasis or Anticipation

■ Colons are also used to stress a word, phrase, or clause that follows it or when a sentence creates anticipation for what immediately follows:

Example: The newspaper published a startling statement: the city is completely out of gasoline.

Time

■ Colons are used to separate hours and minutes in expressions of time:

Example: 5:15 A.M. EST

Titles

■ The colon is used to separate a title from a subtitle:

Example: *Gone with the Wind: A Story of the Old South*

Combination

Don't confuse *combine*—normally a verb unless referring to farm equipment—with *combination,* which is a noun referring to a group of entities.

Incorrect: That combine will be a large one.

Correct: That combination will be a large one.

Comma

A **comma** tells a reader to pause. Commas are used to separate nouns in a series or adjectives in a series of the same rank modifying the same noun.

Example: The workers picked cherries, peaches, and plums.

Example: We swam in the cool, clear, flowing water.

Commas are often used before an *and* in a sentence with a series of nouns or adjectives.

Example: At the zoo we saw elephants, tigers, bears, and monkeys.

Some writers prefer to omit the comma before the *and* in such sentences, unless it is needed for clarity. The same rules apply to using *but* and *or* in sentences with a series of nouns or adjectives. The comma is optional.

Example: His face was weathered, dirty, tired but handsome.

A term consisting of years, months, and days is considered not a series but a single unit of time. No commas are used.

Example: Interest will be computed for 6 years 3 months and 2 days.

Compound and Complex Sentences

Two sentences are often connected with a comma and conjunction, such as *and* or *but*. A comma is used between the clauses of a compound sentence.

Example: John went to the theater, but he left before the play ended.

Do not confuse this with a compound predicate, which takes no comma.

Example: John went to the theater but left before the play ended.

An adverbial clause usually follows the independent clause, and no comma is used. But for emphasis, the order of the clauses is sometimes transposed. Then a comma is used.

Usual Order: James was met by a large delegation when he came home.

Transposed Order: When James came home, he was met by a large delegation.

Introductory Expressions

Introductory expressions, such as transitional words and phrases, mild exclamations, and other independent expressions, are set off by a comma when they occur alone at the beginning of a sentence.

Example: Yes, I will go.

Example: Well, perhaps she is right.

Example: To tell the truth, I think you should not say anything.

A few introductory expressions are more emphatic without punctuation, however, and need not be followed by a comma.

Example: Doubtless she just couldn't be here.

Example: At least you tried.

Example: Indeed you may bring your friends with you.

Other Transitional Words

A comma is used to set off the transitional words *however, therefore,* and *moreover* when used within the sentence or as the first or last word of the sentence.

Example: Jean may not arrive until noon, however.

Example: Her problem, therefore, must be solved at once.

Example: I will be there, moreover, as soon as I can.

Sometimes *though* is used to mean *however* and should be set off with commas.

Example: I will be there, though, if at all possible.

Prepositional Phrases

No comma is used for prepositional phrases within a sentence unless the phrase comes between the subject and the predicate of the clause.

Example: I am sure that because of your generosity we will be able to build the new dormitory.

Example: The product sample, in addition to a diagram, will be sent to you today.

Contrasting Phrases

Contrasting expressions within a sentence are set off by commas.

Example: The lion, not the tiger, growled.

Example: We walk slowly, never quickly, to the garage.

Example: This letter was meant for you, not for me.

Nonrestrictive Modifiers

Nonrestrictive modifiers are phrases or clauses that could be omitted without affecting the meaning of the main clause. Nonrestrictive modifiers should be set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma or by parenthetical commas.

Example: Carlton, my favorite friend, is visiting me.

Example: That car is, I believe, a new model.

Example: Mary Brown, who works next door, is in charge of the festivities.

Infinitive Phrases

An infinitive phrase used independently is set off by commas.

Example: The color is too dark, to list one fault.

If the phrase is used as a modifier, it is not punctuated.

Example: The piano is too large to fit in the room.

Designating Dialogue

A comma is used to separate a dialogue quotation from the main sentence.

Example: "Please come with me," the boy said.

Example: "What do you think," Mr. Bleeker asked, "the mayor will do next?"

Commas also separate the name of the person addressed in dialogue from the remainder of the sentence.

Example: "Will you come with me, Luke?"

Example: "But, Amanda, how do you know that the plane is late?"

A confirming question within a sentence is set off by commas.

Example: "He left, did he not, on the noon plane?"

Repeated Words

A comma is used for clarity and to avoid confusion when the same word is repeated.

Example: Whoever goes, goes without my consent.

Word Omission

When words are omitted in one part of a sentence because they were used in a previous part, a comma is used to show where the words were omitted.

Example: Sam's first car was a Cadillac, and mine, a Ford.

Transposed Adjective Order

An adjective normally precedes the noun it modifies. When an adjective follows a noun, the adjective is set off by commas. When an adjective precedes a noun but also precedes the article before the noun, a comma follows the adjective.

Example: The physician, dignified and competent, told them the bad news.

Example: Dignified and competent, the physician told them the bad news.

Numbers

A comma is used in writing large numbers, separating the thousands digits from the hundreds, the millions digits from the thousands, and so forth.

Example: 249,586

Example: 1,345,000

A comma is used to separate two or more unrelated numbers.

Example: On August 1, 1992, 437 people visited the museum.

Example: Out of eighty, twenty were discarded.

Do not forget the second comma when the date occurs in the middle of the sentence.

Example: She left for England on June 22, 2009, and returned a
month later.

Addresses

Elements of an address are set off by commas.

Example: He lives at 410 Hawthorne Street, Chicago, Illinois, near the
University of Chicago campus.

On an envelope address, there is no comma between the state and the zip
code.

Titles

A comma is used to separate a name and a title.

Example: The letter was from Mrs. Masterson, our president, and
contained a list of instructions.

Do not set off *Jr.* and *Sr.* from proper names with a comma. A Roman numeral is not set off by a comma.

Example: Philip W. Thompson Sr.

Example: Philip W. Thompson III

Degrees are also set off by a comma.

Example: Jennifer Galt, M.D.

Descriptive titles are not set off by a comma.

Example: Ivan the Terrible

Company Names

Company names consisting of a series of names omit the last comma in the series.

Example: Pate, Tate and Waite

When *and Company* completes a series of names, the last comma is also omitted.

Example: Pate, Tate, Waite and Company

Do not use a comma before or after *Inc., Ltd., Limited,* or *Incorporated* unless the official name of the organization uses a comma.

Example: Johnson Brothers, Incorporated

Example: International Metrics Inc.

Example: Benson & Sons, Limited

Common Adjectives

Common adjectives are not written with a capital letter.

Example: a digital watch

Proper adjectives are written with a capital letter.

Example: a Swiss watch

Common Nouns

Common nouns name ordinary people, places, or things. Common nouns are not written with a capital letter unless they begin a sentence.

Example: ball, flower, keys, cat, road, class, neighbors

Company and Product Names

The first time a product is mentioned, precede the name of the product with the company name. For subsequent usage, the product name alone can be used.

Example: Microsoft Windows [first mention] … Windows [subsequent usage]

Example: Ford Mustang [first mention] … Mustang [subsequent usage]

When listing multiple products from the sample company, precede the company name only for the first product.

Example: Ford Mustang, Escape, Explorer, and Focus

Comparatives

When an adjective or adverb is used to compare two things, the **comparative** form is used. To create the comparative form, some adjectives add an *-er* to the end, and some use a modifier before the adjective.

Example: The university is larger than the junior college.

Example: Many people find saving more difficult than spending.

See *Superlative*.

Compared to, Compared with

Compared to and *compared with* can sometimes be used interchangeably. When stressing similarities between items being compared, use *compared to*.

Example: David compared American coffee to French coffee and thought both had rich flavors.

When examining both similarities and differences, use *compared with*.

Example: Wes compared Jennifer's cake recipe with Emily's recipe to determine which one was easiest to prepare.

Complement, Compliment

Complement is a verb that means to add something or to make something better or more attractive.

Example: That blue dress complements your eyes.

Compliment is a noun that means an approving remark.

Example: It was the nicest compliment I'd received in years.

Complements

A **complement** is any word (or phrase) that completes a subject, object, or verb.

A **subject complement** follows a linking verb and is used to rename or define the subject.

Example: A tarn is a <u>small glacial lake</u> [subject complement].

An **object complement** follows or modifies a direct object and can be a noun or adjective.

Example: The players named Logan <u>captain</u> [object complement] to keep him happy.

A **verb complement** is either a direct or indirect object of a verb.

Example: Mark gave <u>Terry</u> [indirect object] all his <u>old albums</u> [direct object].

Complex Prepositions

A group of words that function as a preposition are a **complex preposition**. Complex prepositions consist of two or three words that act as a single unit.

Example: according to, apart from, because of, regardless of, with reference to, on behalf of, in line with, in relation to

Compound Nouns

Groups of words can form **compound nouns**.

Example: new moon

With compound nouns, the first word describes the second word. The second word identifies the thing in question. Sometimes two words are joined to form a new word.

Example: haircut, toothpaste, underground

Sometimes several words are joined to form a compound noun.

Example: daughter-in-law

Compound nouns can be formed using the combinations of words shown in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10 Compound Noun Combinations

Noun plus noun	mouthwash
Adjective plus noun	weekly lotto
Verb plus noun	wading pool
Preposition plus noun	underworld
Noun plus verb	grasshopper
Noun plus preposition	love-in
Adjective plus verb	dry cleaning
Verb plus preposition	stand by

Compound Predicates

See *Predicates*.

Compound Sentences

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses, with two thoughts in the sentence, and either can stand alone.

The clauses of a compound sentence are separated either by a semicolon or by a comma and a coordinating conjunction. The most common coordinating conjunction is *and*; it simply links the two ideas. Other coordinating conjunctions, such as *but, or, for, yet,* and *so*, establish a relationship between the two clauses.

Compounding Sentence Elements

You can combine various sentence elements to create compound sentences.

■ Subjects—Two or more subjects doing parallel things can be combined as a compound subject.

Example: Working together, Acme and Industrial Pipe developed a new type of steel.

■ Objects—When the subjects are acting on two or more things in parallel, the objects can be combined.

Example: The company president believed that the partnership between the two companies might help them increase sales and that he could eventually force a merger.

■ Verbs and verbals—When the subjects are doing two things simultaneously, the elements can be combined by compounding verbs and verbals.

Example: He studied sentence structure and grammar and learned how to speak and write effectively.

■ Modifiers—When appropriate, modifiers and prepositional phrases can be compounded.

Example: The company recruited its programmers from universities across the country and various competing companies.

Compound Words

Compound words are two or more words that are used to mean a single concept.

Open Compounds

Some compound words, called **open compounds**, are written as two separate words with a space between them. Table 2.11 presents a list of commonly used open compounds.

Table 2.11 Common Open Compounds

ad hoc	bed wetter	bona fide
drop in	half brother	life cycle
more or less	side effects	stick up
T square	time frame	under way
V neck	vice versa	

Closed Compounds

Some compound words, called **closed compounds**, are combined into a single word. Table 2.12 contains is a list of commonly used closed compounds.

Table 2.12 Common Closed Compounds

backslide	carryover	clearheaded
coldcock	crossbreed	deadpan
handwrite	layoffs	lifeline
longtime	makeup	ongoing
sendoff	shortlist	sidecar
standstill	stickhandle	twofold
waterlogged		

Hyphenated Compounds

Some compound words are separated by a hyphen. These are called **hyphenated compounds**. Table 2.13 presents a list of commonly used hyphenated compounds.

Table 2.13 Common Hyphenated Compounds

all-encompassing	all-knowing	anti-inflammatory
back-check	bed-wetting	cold-shoulder
community-wide	co-worker	cross-fertilize
dead-on	de-emphasize	do-able
drop-kick	ex-employee	ex-husband
multi-item	non-native	nuclear-free
off-color	pre-engineered	president-elect
self-doubts	self-esteem	stand-in
time-out	water-resistant	

Comptroller, Controller

A *comptroller* is the chief accountant in a governmental agency.

Example: the Georgia Comptroller of Public Accounts

A *controller* is the chief accountant in a business.

Example: Our controller, Mike Barrows, will be attending the board of directors meeting.

Concord

When combinations of words have a grammatical relationship that affects the form of one or more of the words, they show **concord**. Concord refers to the agreement between the form of the subject and the form of the verb. It also applies to noun phrases and personal pronouns such as *he, she, it,* and *they.* The grammatical relationship requires agreement in person, number, and gender.

Example: I sing, she sings, we sing. [Adding the *s* to *she sings* is required for third person singular and a present tense verb.]

Concrete Nouns

Concrete nouns refer to things that actually exist as opposed to abstract nouns, which refer to things that do not have a tangible physical existence.

Example: car, bus, airplane, tree, skin

Concrete nouns can be either countable or uncountable.

Conditional Perfect

Conditional perfect is a term used to talk about imaginary situations in the past. Conditional perfect is formed with the phrase *would have* plus the past participle of the verb.

Example: If he had seen the doctor, he would have not gotten sick.

Conditionals

Conditionals are used when writing about possible or imaginary situations.

The **first conditional** is used for future actions that are dependent on another future action. First conditional is composed of *if* + present simple + *will*.

Example: If he wakes up early enough, we will take him to breakfast with us.

Second conditional is used for future actions that are dependent on another future action where there is little chance of success. Second conditional is composed of *if* + past simple + *would* + base form.

Example: If I found a pot of gold, I would share it with my friends.

Second conditional can also be used for imaginary present situations when conditions for the action are not possible.

Example: If you had visited your mother, she wouldn't be so angry with you.

Third conditional is used for past situations where the conditional action did not occur. Third conditional is composed of *if* + past perfect + *would have* + past participle.

Example: If we had seen them, we would have invited them to dinner.

Zero conditional is used when actions will be true when the conditions are met. Zero conditional is composed of *if* + present simple + present simple.

Example: If you put honey in your tea, it tastes sweet.

Mixed conditionals involve combinations of second and third conditionals.

Other conditionals consist of using one of two formations. One is *if + will + will*.

Example: <u>If</u> you <u>will</u> write the report, I <u>will</u> do the research.

The other is *would + if + would*.

Example: I <u>would</u> appreciate it <u>if</u> you <u>would</u> help me more.

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that connect parts of a sentence. The simplest conjunctions are called **coordinating conjunctions**.

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

And

The coordinating conjunction *and* can be used:

■ To suggest that one idea is sequential to another.

Example: Steve sent in his application and waited for the response in the mail.

■ To suggest that an idea is the result of another.

Example: Linda heard the thunder and quickly took shelter inside the house.

■ To suggest that one idea is in contrast to another.

Example: Carla is an artist and her sister is a doctor.

■ Frequently the conjunction *but* is used for this purpose.

■ To suggest an element of surprise.

Example: Atlanta is a beautiful city and has symptoms of urban blight.

- Frequently the conjunction *yet* is used for this purpose.
- To suggest that one clause is dependent.

Example: Drink too much water before the trip, and you'll soon find yourself stopping at every rest area.

- To make a comment on the first clause.

Example: Horace became addicted to gambling—and that's why he moved to Las Vegas.

But

The coordinating conjunction *but* can be used:

- To suggest an unexpected contrast.

Example: Tom lost money in his investments, but he still maintained a comfortable lifestyle.

- To express positively what the first part of the sentence implies negatively.

Example: Tom never invested foolishly, but listened carefully to the advice of investment newsletters.

- To connect two ideas with the meaning "with the exception of."

Example: Everyone but Tom is making money in the stock market.

Or

The coordinating conjunction *or* can be used:

- To suggest that only one possibility is realistic and excludes the other.

Example: You can sell your investment now, or you can lose all your money.

■   To suggest alternatives.

Example: We can go out to eat and to a movie, or we can just stay home and see what's on TV.

■   To suggest a refinement of the first clause.

Example: The University of Texas is the best school in the state, or so it seems to all UT alumni.

■   To suggest a correction to the first part of the sentence.

Example: There's no way you can lose money in this investment, or so Eric told himself.

■   To suggest a negative condition.

Example: You have two choices: pay taxes or die.

Punctuation for Coordinating Conjunctions

When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses, it is often accompanied by a comma.

Example: Bailey wants to play football for Texas, but he has had trouble with his grades.

It is also correct to use a comma with *and* when used to attach the items in a list.

Example: John needs to study harder in math, history, physics, and economics.

When a coordinating conjunction is used to connect all the elements in a series, a comma is not used.

Example: Math and history and physics are the subjects that give John the most trouble.

Commas are also used with *but* when a sentence expresses a contrast.

Example: Thomas is a great manager, but not very smart.

Other Conjunctions

The conjunction *nor* is used occasionally by itself; however, it is most commonly used in a correlative pair with *neither*.

Example: He is neither rich nor poor.

Nor can be used with negative expressions.

Example: This is not how I normally dress, nor should you get the idea I have no taste in clothes.

The word *yet* sometimes functions as an adverb and has various meanings such as in addition, even, still, and eventually. It also functions as a coordinating conjunction with a meaning of nevertheless or but.

Example: Rosemary is an expert in computer programming, yet her real passion is poetry.

The word *for* is often used as a preposition, but it sometimes acts as a coordinating conjunction. When *for* is used as a coordinating conjunction, it has a meaning of because or since.

Example: For he's a jolly good fellow.

The conjunction *so* can be used to connect two independent clauses along with a comma. It has the meaning of as well as, therefore, or in addition.

Subordinating Conjunctions

A **subordinating conjunction** comes at the beginning of a dependent clause and establishes the relationship between the clause and the rest of the sentence. Table 2.14 shows a list of subordinating conjunctions.

Example: He spoke Spanish <u>as if</u> he had been born in Mexico.

Many subordinating conjunctions also serve as prepositions.

Table 2.14 Subordinating Conjunctions

after	if	though
although	if only	till
as	in order that	unless
as if	now that	until
as long as	once	when
as though	rather than	whenever
because	since	where
before	so that	whereas
even if	than	wherever
even though	that	while

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions combine with other words to form grammatically equal pairs. The following is a list of correlative conjunctions.

- Both, and
- Either, or
- Not only, but also
- Neither, nor
- Whether, or
- Not, but
- As, as

Conjunctive Adverbs

A **conjunctive adverb** connects independent clauses. Common conjunctive adverbs include: *however, moreover, therefore,* and *nevertheless.*

Conjunctive adverbs require the use of semicolons.

Example: The repairs to the space station should be successful; however, I'm a bit concerned about the long spacewalk.

Conjunctive adverbs are often confused with coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, for, nor, or, yet,* and *while*). Coordinating conjunctions do not require semicolons. See *Coordinating Conjunctions.*

Conjuncts

A **conjunct** is used to relate something said in one sentence to another sentence.

Example: <u>That being said</u> [information from the previous sentence], we made money on the deal.

A conjunct can be removed without making the sentence ungrammatical.

Connote, Denote

Denotation is the literal meaning of a word.

Example: Bullheaded and determined both denote stubbornness.

Broader associations with a word are its *connotations.*

Example: Being determined connotes an adherence to purpose.

Considered to Be

The phrase *considered to be* can often be eliminated from your sentences.

Consonants

The letters *B, C, D, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, P, Q, R, S, T, V, W, X,* and *Z* are consonants in the English language.

Continuous Verbs

Continuous verbs are used to describe action that is taking place in the past, present, or future.

One use for continuous verbs is to describe past actions that were in progress at some time in the past, but the actions were not yet finished.

> **Example:** At 10:30 this morning, Mark was talking to the board of directors.

Another use for continuous verbs is to describe two or more actions that were in progress in the past at the same time.

> **Example:** While I was meeting with the general manager, he was busy scanning email messages on his Blackberry.

A third use for continuous verbs is to describe something that was happening when something else happened.

> **Example:** I was deep in the middle of my sales pitch, when the fire alarm suddenly went off.

Contractions

A **contraction** is a shortened form of one or more words with an apostrophe taking the place of the missing letter or letters. Do not use contractions in formal business writing.

> **Example:** don't, I'm, you're, it's, we're, we'd

In spoken English, forms of the verb *to be* and other auxiliary verbs are often contracted.

Example: I am, I'm; you will, you'll; it is, it's

Contractions are often used with *not* to negate a verb.

Example: is not, isn't; are not, aren't; did not, didn't

Contractions are often used with *have*.

Example: I have, I've; would have, would've

Some single words are sometimes contracted.

Example: of, o'; of the clock, o'clock; madam, ma'am

Table 2.15 shows a list of common contractions.

Table 2.15 Common Contractions

	Be	**Will**	**Would**	**Have**	**Had**
I	I'm I am	I'll I will	I'd I would	I've I have	I'd I had
you	you're you are	you'll you will	you'd you would	you've you have	you'd you had
he	he's he is	he'll he will	he'd he would	he's he has	he'd he had
she	she's she is	she'll she will	she'd she would	she's she has	she'd she had
it	it's (or 'tis) it is	it'll it will	it'd it would	it's it has	it'd it had
we	we're we are	we'll we will	we'd we would	we've we have	we'd we had

they	they're they are	they'll they will	they'd they would	they've they have	they'd they had
that	that's that is	that'll that will	that'd that would	that's that has	that'd that had
who	who's who is	who'll who will	who'd who would	who's who has	who'd who has
what	what's what is what're what are	what'll what will	what'd what would	what's what has	what'd what had
where	where's where is	where'll where will	where'd where would	where's where has	where'd where had
when	when's when is	when'll when will	when'd when would	when's when has	when'd when had
why	why's why is	why'll why will	why'd why would	why's why has	why'd why had
how	how's how is	how'll how will	how'd how would	how's how has	how'd how had

Contranyms

Contranyms are words that can mean the opposite of themselves.

Example: *Overlook* can mean to look at closely or to miss completely.

See *Antagonyms*.

Control

See *Check, Control*.

Convince, Persuade

Convince and *persuade* are not synonyms.

■ To *convince* is to influence someone to adopt a point of view by evidence or by an intellectual argument.

Example: Mike convinced Janet that she was wrong about the incident at the conference.

■ To *persuade* is to talk someone into something by appeals made to morals or emotion.

Example: Mike persuaded Janet to sign up for Toastmasters.

Cooperate

Cooperate is a verb that means to work together. Therefore, *cooperate together* is redundant.

Incorrect: If they cooperate together, their purpose will be accomplished.

Correct: If they cooperate, their purpose will be accomplished.

Coordinated Adjectives

See *Adjectives.*

Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are used to join two clauses of equal importance. Words like *for, and, nor, but, or,* and *yet* are coordinating conjunctions.

Copula Verbs

Copula verbs are verbs that connect the subject to the complement. Copula verbs are also called **linking verbs**.

Example: That band <u>plays</u> [connects the subject to the adjective] great.

Common copula verbs are *be, look, feel, taste, smell, sound, seem, appear, get, become, grow, stay, keep, turn, prove, go, remain, resemble, run,* and *lie.*

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Correlative Conjunction

See *Conjunctions.*

Could of, Might of

See *Might of, Should of, Would of, Could of.*

Council, Counsel, Consul

To use these words correctly in your writing, consider these definitions:

- A *council* is a group of persons convened for advisory purposes.

- *Counsel* is advice; the word sometimes means attorney.

- A *consul* is an official appointed by a government to report on matters that the official observes while residing in a foreign land.

Count Nouns

Count nouns are nouns that have both a singular and plural form. The plural of a count noun is usually formed by adding *s*.

Credible, Credulous

Credible means believable or worthy of being believed. *Credulou*s means inclined to believe too readily.

Correct: He related the incident in a credible manner.

Correct: She is too credulous for her own good.

Cross-Reference

A **cross-reference** is a link in a document to related or more detailed information. Cross-referencing can be accomplished by:

■ Adding the word *see* plus the term in italics.

Example: See *Operating Systems.*

■ Adding a hyperlink to Web-based documents.

■ Adding an index to the end of the document.

Cut-and-Paste

Cut-and-paste is a term commonly used to describe editing functions in software such as word processing.

When using the term *cut-and-paste* in business writing, use it only as an adjective, not as a noun phrase or verb phrase. Always include hyphens in *cut-and-paste*.

Incorrect: Go to the Edit menu and do a cut-and-paste.

Incorrect: In a word processor, you can cut and paste text.

Correct: In most word processors, you can perform a cut-and-paste operation.

D

Danger Notice

See *Notices*.

Dangling Modifiers

A **modifier** is a word or phrase that gives more detail about a subject. A **dangling modifier** modifies a word that is not clearly stated in a sentence.

Example: Having struggled through the long commute, Dan parked his car in his usual spot.

The doer must be the subject of the main clause that follows. In the example, Dan is the logical doer; therefore this sentence does not have a dangling modifier.

Example: Having struggled through the long commute, the car was parked in the usual spot.

"Having struggled" is a participle that expresses action, but the doer is not the parking spot. Because the doer of the action is not clearly stated, this participial phrase is a dangling modifier.

Characteristics of Dangling Modifiers

Dangling modifiers typically occur at the beginning of a sentence as an introductory clause or phrase. Dangling modifiers can also appear at the end of a sentence. Dangling modifiers often have a gerund (*-ing* word) or an infinitive (*to + be* word) near the beginning of the sentence.

Incorrect: Not having made contingency plans, the project was a failure.

Revising Dangling Modifiers

Name the doer of the action in a sentence as the subject of the main clause.

> **Dangling modifier:** Having arrived late for the meeting, a recap of the first 30 minutes was needed.
>
> **Revision:** Having arrived late for the meeting, the project manager needed a recap of the first 30 minutes.

Revise the dangling phrase into a complete introductory clause by naming the doer in that clause.

> **Dangling modifier:** Without knowing the reason, it was impossible to order larger displays.
>
> **Revision:** Because my manager did not know the reason, it was impossible to order larger displays.

Combine the introductory phrase and main clause into one.

> **Dangling modifier:** To improve his sales, the advertising budget was increased.
>
> **Revision:** His sales improved by increasing the advertising budget.

Dangling Participles

Dangling participles modify the noun or pronoun to which they refer (the referent). Because position determines the referent, how you construct the sentence determines the meaning.

> **Incorrect:** Walking down Main Street, the art museum is visible.

This implies the art museum is walking down Main Street.

> **Correct:** Walking down Main Street, you can see the art museum.

Dash

The **dash** is used to introduce an added thought.

Example: I shall go with you—you don't mind, do you?

The dash also breaks the continuity of a thought as a digression.

Example: "The Scherzo Sonata" by Tolstoy is a sad story—but the writing is magnificent.

The dash is sometimes used before and after a parenthetical expression in place of commas.

Example: Henry Higgins—bareheaded and without a coat—left the house and ran down the road.

The dash can also be a super comma. When a sentence already contains a series separated by commas, a dash is a good tool for setting off a clause that might otherwise look like it is part of the series.

Example: The Mississippi River weaves through Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana—a state famous for its French culture—before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico.

When typing, the dash is indicated by two hyphens (--). There are two types of dashes: the en dash (–) and the em dash (—). The en dash is a little longer than a hyphen and is used for ranges of time and other numbers in place of a hyphen when combining open compounds.

Example: The years 2007–2009 were not good for investors.

The em dash is about the same width as the letter *m* and is used like a super comma to add emphasis or an abrupt change of thought.

Example: The conference was attended by the leaders of France, Germany, and Spain—a country that recently elected its president— all of whom were enthusiastically welcomed during the opening night ceremony.

You can add the en dash and em dash using the Insert/Symbol function on a word processor such as Microsoft Word.

Data

Data is always plural. *Datum* is the singular form but is rarely used.

Incorrect: This data proves that our business is growing.

Correct: These data prove that our business is growing.

Dates

When writing a date, a comma is placed between the day and the year.

Example: September 16, 2012

There is no comma if the date is written in the European style.

Example: 16 September 2012

Dates can also be written using a slash or hyphen to separate the day, month, and year. When a slash or hyphen is used, numerals are used to represent the month.

Example: 9/16/2012 or 9-16-2012

Do not use slashes or hyphens when writing dates in formal business documents.

When including the day of the week, add a comma after the day.

Example: Monday, September 16, 2012

When just writing a month and year, do not add a comma between them.

Incorrect: September, 2012

Correct: September 2012

When abbreviating a decade, there are two options. Use no apostrophe between the number and the *s*.

Example: 1990s

Insert an apostrophe to show that something was left out.

Example: '80s

Use the cardinal number when writing the days of the month without a year.

Incorrect: His birthday is March 26th [ordinal].

Correct: His birthday is March 26 [cardinal].

When writing a century as a noun, do not use a hyphen.

Example: The twentieth century gave birth to the television.

When writing a century as an adjective, use a hyphen.

Example: It was the nineteenth-century medical practices that caused so many battlefield deaths.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Use the entire phrase *deaf or hard of hearing* when referring to people who are deaf. Use *deaf* when space is limited. Hyphenate *hard-of-hearing* when it precedes a noun that it modifies.

Example: A man doing sign language stood on the side of the stage for the deaf or hard-of-hearing audience members.

Deal

Deal should not be used informally to refer to a business agreement.

Incorrect: She made a deal to buy the house.

Correct: She made an agreement to buy the house.

Decimals

The **decimal system** is a number system based on 10 that allows us to write large or small numbers.

■   Numbers placed to the left of a decimal point are whole numbers.

■   Numbers placed to the right of a decimal point are fractions that are equal to less than one.

Figure 2.2 illustrates whole numbers and fractions.

Figure 2.2 Whole Numbers and Fractions
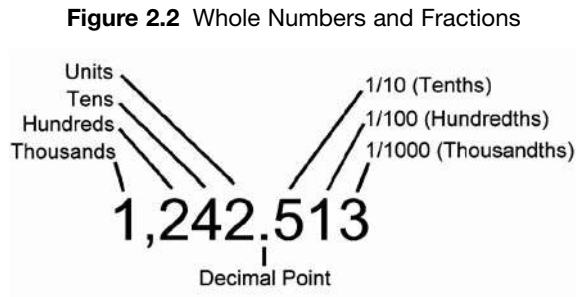
When writing decimals, you can write either the numerical form or the number in words.

Example: 0.3 or three-tenths

When writing a whole number and a fraction in words, add the word *and* to signal the location of the decimal.

Example: Two and three-tenths [written in numbers as 2.3]

When writing the numerical form of hundredths or thousandths, add zeros as place holders if there are no other numbers or if there is no whole number or decimal.

Example: 0.003 [written in words as three-thousandths]

A fraction can be written as a decimal.

Example: 0.5 [one-half]

Example: 0.25 [one-fourth]

Example: 0.333 [one-third]

Decimals can be written as a percentage. Move the decimal point two places to the right to translate a decimal into a percentage.

Example: 0.50 = 50 [fifty percent]

Example: 1.00 = 100 [one hundred percent]

Declarative Mood

Mood as a verb refers to the attitude of the speaker. The **declarative mood** is the normal form of a verb used to convey information or make statements of fact. The declarative mood is used to indicate that something has happened or will happen.

Declarative Sentence

A **declarative sentence** is used to state facts or an argument. Declarative sentences do not require an answer or reaction from the reader.

Example: Mike plays the guitar.

> **Example:** The weather is warm in Florida.

Declarative sentences are the most common type of sentence. Punctuate these sentences with a period.

Defining Relative Clause

A **defining relative clause** modifies a noun or noun phrase and provides essential information that is required for a sentence to make sense.

> **Example:** The bed and breakfast <u>that we stayed in</u> [defining relative clause] was really nice.

Defining relative clauses can begin with *who, whose,* and *that* for defining people and *which, whose,* and *that* for defining things.

Definite Article

Nouns are preceded by words like *the, a,* or *an.* These words are called **determiners**. The determiner *the* is a **definite article**. A definite article restricts the meaning of a noun to refer to something already known by the reader from earlier sentences.

> **Example:** A taxi pulled up next to Joe. He got into the taxi [the taxi that pulled up].

The is used before both singular and plural nouns.

> **Example:** the dog, the dogs; the notebook, the notebooks; the pear, the pears

Defuse, Diffuse

You can *defuse* a bomb or dangerous situation by removing the trigger or the fuse.

> **Example:** Mike defused the situation by moving Mary to another project.

To *diffuse* is to spread something.

> **Example:** Rotten smells from the refrigerator diffused through the office air conditioning system.

Degree Adverbs

Modifying adverbs like *very* and *extremely* are called **degree adverbs** because they specify the degree of another adjective or adverb. Other degree adverbs are *almost, barely, highly, quite, slightly, totally,* and *utterly.*

Degree Titles

When writing about college degrees, use lowercase spelling.

> **Example:** The university near my house, Kennesaw State University, does not offer a doctor of philosophy degree.

College degrees can be shortened for less formal writing.

> **Example:** I received my bachelor's from the University of Texas at Austin.

Capitalize the degree name when specifying a particular degree.

> **Example:** I received a Bachelor of Science in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin.

Capitalize the abbreviations for degrees.

> **Example:** B.A., M.A., Ph.D.

Deixis

Deixis refers to words or phrases that make sense only in the context of a particular sentence.

Example: Jeff's presentation was scheduled to begin in ten minutes, and <u>he</u> [refers to Jeff] was feeling nervous about it [refers to the presentation].

Demonstrative Adjectives

Demonstrative adjectives are words like *this, that, these,* and *those* that tell whether a noun they modify is singular or plural and where the noun is located.

Example: I've been using <u>this</u> hammer.

Example: I climbed <u>that</u> mountain when I was twelve.

Example: <u>These</u> are the shoes I like best.

Example: I would like some of <u>those</u> flowers on my desk.

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns are words like *this, that, these, those,* and *such* that can be used as either pronouns or as determiners.

As pronouns, the demonstrative pronouns identify a noun.

Example: *That* is marvelous! I will never forget *this.* Such is life.

As a determiner, the demonstrative adjectivally modifies a noun that follows. It is used to convey a sense of time and distance.

Example: *These* [strawberries that are in front of me] look delicious.

Example: *Those* [that are further away] look even better.

A sense of emotional distance can also be conveyed through the use of demonstrative pronouns. Pronouns used in this way receive special emphasis in a spoken sentence.

Example: You're going to eat *that*?

When used as subjects, demonstrative pronouns can be used to refer to objects as well as persons.

Example: *This* is my partner. *This* is my book.

Denominal Adjectives

Denominal adjectives are words that act like adjectives but are actually nouns. Denominals are derived from nouns.

Example: I visited a <u>stone</u> fort.

Example: We watched the <u>physics</u> experiment.

Denominals include references to nationality.

Example: An <u>Asian</u> nurse helped my father in the hospital.

Denote, Connote

See *Connote, Denote*.

Dependent Clauses

A **dependent clause** cannot stand by itself like an independent clause. A dependent clause must be combined with an independent clause to make a sentence.

Dependent clauses can perform a variety of functions in a sentence. They can be noun clauses, adverb clauses, or adjective clauses.

Noun clauses can do anything a noun can do in a sentence.

> **Example:** <u>What he knows about boxing</u> is not important to me.

Adverb clauses tell us about what is going on in the independent clause: where, when, or why.

> **Example:** <u>When the game is over,</u> we'll go get some burgers.

Adjective clauses function just like multiword adjectives to modify a noun.

> **Example:** My wife, <u>who is a video producer,</u> has just completed an award-winning documentary about music.

Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing is used to help the reader visualize the topic and to experience what the writer experienced. Descriptive writing uses language of interest to the five senses. It includes concrete details to describe people, places, things, and actions. Figurative language such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, symbolism, and personification are often used in descriptive writing.

Desert, Dessert

To correctly use these words in your writing, consider their definitions.

■ A *desert* is dry barren landscape.

■ A *dessert* is a sweet food served at the end of a meal.

Determiners

Articles, determiners, and **quantifiers** are little words that precede and modify nouns.

> **Example:** the dog, a cat, those people, whatever purpose, either way, your choice

Sometimes these words tell you whether the subject is something specific or more general. Sometimes they tell you how much or how many.

The following is a list of determiner categories:

- Articles—*an, a, the*

- Determiners—articles and other limiters such as *a, an, five, her, our, those, that, several, some*

- Possessive nouns—*Kevin's,* the *worker's,* my *mother's*

- Possessive pronouns—*his, your, their, whose*

- Numbers—*one, two, three,* and so on

- Demonstrative pronouns—*this, that, these, those, such*

Predeterminers occur prior to other determiners and include:

- Multipliers—*double, twice, two/three times,* etc.

- Fractional expressions—*one-half, one-third,* etc.

- The words *both, half,* and *all.*

- The intensifiers—*quite, rather,* and *such.*

Multipliers precede plural count and mass nouns and occur with single-count nouns describing an amount.

Example: This classroom holds <u>three</u> <u>times</u> the students as my old room.

Example: This time we added <u>twice</u> the amount of air in the tire.

Fractional expressions have a similar construction as multipliers and optionally include *of.*

Example: <u>One-half of</u> the voters favored lower taxes.

Intensifiers occur primarily in casual speech and are more common in British English than in American English.

Example: This food is <u>rather</u> bland, isn't it?

Example: The voters made <u>quite</u> a fuss over the debate.

Device, Devise

To correctly use these words in your writing, consider their definitions.

- *Device* is noun that means a piece of equipment designed for a special purpose or a special technique or strategy.

- *Devise* is a verb that means to think of a new idea.

Diacritic

A mark added to a letter that changes the pronunciation is a **diacritic**. Diacritics can appear above or below a letter. Diacritics are used for words that come from other languages.

Example: café, façade

Different from, Different than

Different from takes an object. *Different than* introduces a clause.

Incorrect: That coat is different than mine.

Correct: That coat is different from mine.

Correct: He was different than I remembered.

Diffuse, Defuse

See *Defuse, Diffuse*.

Dimensions

The symbols reserved for technical writing are a single prime (′) for feet, a double prime (″) for inches, and a multiplication sign (×) for by.

Example: 9′ × 12′ (9 feet by 12 feet)

Example: 8″ × 10″ (8 inches by 10 inches)

In regular prose text, write out the word *by* for ×.

Ciphers (zeros) can be used to indicate exact measurement if they improve clarity.

Example: 9′0″ × 12′0″ × 20′6″

Figure 2.3 shows how to interpret a ciphered measurement.

Figure 2.3   Interpretation of a Ciphered Measurement

Nine feet three inches by twelve feet four inches

9'3" x 12'4"
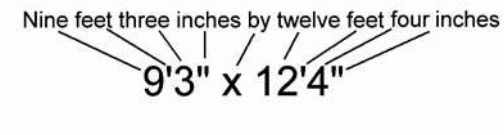
Direct Objects

In a sentence, the word or words that designate the person or thing receiving the action of a transitive verb is called the **direct object**.

Example: My brother wrecked the *car* [direct object].

Disability

See *Handicap, Disability.*

Disc, Disk

A compact *disc* is spelled with a *c*. *Discs* often are used for magnetic media that is reproduced using a laser.

A computer hard *disk* drive is spelled with a *k*.

Discreet, Discrete

Discreet means showing discernment or good judgment in conduct or speech.

Example: You have to be discreet when talking politics around
my parents.

Discrete means a separate or distant entity.

Example: The study separated people into two discrete groups.

Disease Names

Many diseases are named after their discoverer. The *disease* or *syndrome* part of the name is not capitalized.

The medical profession has recommended dropping the *'s* from many disease names.

Example: Ménière syndrome, Bright disease, Asperger syndrome,
Huntington disease, Lyme disease

Some disease names still retain the *'s*.

Example: Lou Gehrig's disease, Legionnaire's disease, Alzheimer's
disease

Disjuncts

A **disjunct** is used to express the writer's attitude toward something being described in a sentence.

Example: <u>Happily</u> [shows the writer's attitude], I agreed to his marriage proposal.

Display, Monitor, Screen

Use the term *display* when referring to the computer output device, such as a flat-panel *display.*

Monitor is an older technological term that is synonymous with *display*; however, it is no longer often used.

Use the term *screen* to refer to the graphics that can be seen on the *display* or to the actual surface where the graphics appear.

Display should not be used as an intransitive verb. Use *appear* instead.

Incorrect: After clicking the Print button, the Print dialog displays.

Correct: After clicking the Print button, the Print dialog appears.

Correct: The Print dialog displays a list of printers.

Disyllabic

A **disyllabic** word has two syllables.

Ditransitive Verbs

A **ditransitive verb** can take both a direct object and an indirect object.

Example: She gave <u>him</u> [indirect object] the <u>book</u> [direct object].

Ditto Marks

Ditto marks (″) mean the same as stated above or before, a repeat, or a duplicate. Ditto marks are often used in lists or tables, but they should not be used in formal business documents.

Do, Does, Did

Do is used as an auxiliary verb to express negatives and to ask questions.

Example: I don't drive.

Example: Do you drive?

Does is used for third-person singular subjects in the present tense.

Example: Does she drive?

Did is used for first person and third person in the past tense.

Example: Did you drive?

Do, does, and *did* can be used for short answers where the main verb has been omitted.

Example: [Do you drive?] I do.

Example: [Does she drive?] She does.

Example: [Did she drive?] She did.

For yes-or-no questions, the form of *do* is put in front of the subject, and the main verb comes after the subject.

Example: Did your mother drive?

Forms of *do* can be used to express similarities and differences along with *so* and *neither*.

Example: My mother drives and so does my father.

Example: My mother doesn't like to drive; neither do I.

Do allows you to avoid having to repeat a verb.

Example: My mother drives as well as my father does.

Do can be used emphatically.

■ To add emphasis—She loves you. She really does!

■ To add emphasis to an imperative—Do sit down.

■ To add emphasis to a frequency adverb—He always does manage to get to work on time.

■ To contradict a negative statement—But, I didn't say that.

■ To ask a clarifying question—Then who did say it?

■ To indicate a strong concession—Though he didn't get a ticket this time, he did get a warning.

Dollars and Cents

It is best to use figures when writing about money.

Example: 1 cent or 1¢

Example: 20 cents or 20¢

Example: 20,000 dollars or $20,000

Amounts of money are always written out when beginning a sentence.

Incorrect: 1 cent was contributed by each child.

Correct: One cent was contributed by each child.

A series of prices is written in figures only.

Example: These shoes are priced at $50, $60, and $85.

Dollar and Cent Signs

Use the dollar sign before the number, not the word *dollar* or *dollars* after the number.

Example: The office space rents for $1,700 per month.

If a large number combines figures and words, use the dollar sign before the figure.

Incorrect: The budget calls for 850 billion dollars.

Correct: The budget calls for $850 billion.

Repeat the dollar sign with successive numbers.

Example: The bonds could be purchased in denominations of $10,000, $12,000, $15,000, and $20,000.

Exception: Omit all but the first dollar sign when numbers are in tabulated form.

Example: The bonds could be purchased in denominations of the following amounts:
$10,000
12,000
15,000
20,000

The dollar sign is not used when the figure given is in cents alone. Use the cent sign (¢) after amounts less than one dollar, but never use the cent sign with a decimal point.

Incorrect: .25¢ [That would mean one-fourth of a cent.]

Correct: 25¢

Exception: The only time the dollar sign is used when the figure is in cents alone is in statistical work when the part of the dollar is carried out to more than two decimal places.

Example: $0.3564

Decimal Points

Decimal points are another way of writing fractions, especially large fractions. When a decimal occurs with no unit before it, use a cipher (zero) for quick interpretation.

Example: a 0.75-yard measurement, rainfall of 0.356 inch

Sometimes the fraction is part of a dollar. When the amount of dollars given is not followed by cents, omit the decimal point and the ciphers.

Example: $3, $1,200, $17.75

The decimal point and ciphers are not used with even amounts of money unless in tabulated form. If tabulated and if some amounts contain cents and some do not, the even amounts should contain ciphers.

Don't, Doesn't

Don't means do not; *doesn't* means does not.

Incorrect: He don't care to go with us.

Correct: He doesn't care to go with us.

Do's and Don'ts

Pay attention to the placement of apostrophes when writing the phrase *do's and don'ts*.

Incorrect: do's and don't's

Correct: do's and don'ts

Dot-Com

Dot-com refers to a Web-based business. Use dot-com as an adjective, not as a noun or verb. Hyphenate dot-com. When using it in titles or headings, do not capitalize the letter following the hyphen.

Incorrect: The programmers worked in the garage with hopes of one day starting their own dot-com.

Correct: Last year those dot-com stocks were really inexpensive.

Double Negatives

Double negatives occur when you use more than one negative word or phrase to express a single negative thought. Double negatives should not be used.

Incorrect: He doesn't never want to work here again.

Correct: He doesn't ever want to work here again.

Words like *hardly, barely,* and *scarcely* are negative in effect and can lead to double negatives.

Incorrect: She hardly never reads the newspaper.

Correct: She hardly reads the newspaper.

Use of the contraction *not (n't)* is negative in effect.

Incorrect: She doesn't offer no reasons for being late.

Correct: She doesn't offer any reasons for being late.

Double Possessives

A **double possessive** is two or more consecutive nouns in the possessive case. All nouns in the series carry apostrophes.

Example: I visited the tombs under St. Peter's Cathedral's main floor.

Double-Click

When writing software instructions, hyphenate *double-click* to describe mouse commands. Hyphenate *right-mouse click* to describe that type of mouse command.

Download, Upload

To *download* is to transfer files to a computer from a network, the Internet, or storage device.

To *upload* is to transfer files from your computer to a network, storage device, the Internet, or another computer.

Downtoners

Downtoners are adverbs that are used to tone down a verb. Common downtoner adverbs are *kind of, sort of, mildly, to some extent, almost,* and *all but*.

Example: The church was all but destroyed by the fire.

Example: She almost resigned after the demotion.

Example: We can improve morale to some extent.

Example: She mildly disapproved of his drinking.

Example: Mike sort of felt betrayed by his boss.

Example: I kind of like this job.

Drag-and-Drop

Drag-and-drop is a term used to describe a software editing process in which a mouse user moves text or objects from one place on the screen to another.

Use *drag-and-drop* in business and technical documents only as an adjective. Do not use *drag-and-drop* as a noun or verb.

Incorrect: To move the files to your flash drive, open the flash drive and drag-and-drop [used as a verb] the files you want into the folder.

Correct: It is easy to move the paragraph using a drag-and-drop [used as an adjective] procedure.

Correct: To moves the files to your flash drive, open the flash drive and use a drag-and-drop [used as an adjective] operation to move the files.

Due to the Fact That

This phrase should be avoided; use the word *because* instead.

DVD

See *CD, DVD*.

Dynamic Adjectives

Dynamic adjectives are used to describe attributes that are under the control of the person, place, or thing that possesses them.

Typical dynamic adjectives are *calm, careful, cruel, disruptive, foolish, friendly, good, impatient, mannerly, patient, rude, shy, suspicious, tidy, vacuous,* and *vain*.

Dynamic adjectives can be used in imperative sentences.

Example: Don't be foolish!

Example: Be patient.

Dynamic Verbs

Dynamic verbs are used to show continued or progressive action. Dynamic verbs are used to describe an action that occurs over time and that may or may not have a specific endpoint or may not yet have occurred.

Example: He's lying on the sofa.

Dynamic verbs are also known as action verbs. Dynamic verbs often are used in the continuous *be + ing* forms.

Example: The sun is melting the snowman.

E

Each Other, One Another

Use *each other* when referring to two people.

Example: Mike and Susan looked at each other.

Use *one another* when referring to more than two people.

Example: The four people in the car looked at one another.

Each, Their

Pronouns must agree in number and person with the words to which they refer.

Incorrect: Each drives their own car.

Correct: Each drives his own car.

Correct: Each [singular pronoun, the subject] of the women listed her needs.

Effect, Affect

See *Affect*, *Effect*.

Eggcorn

Words that sound similar but that have different meanings may be used by mistake. Such words are called **eggcorns**.

Incorrect: Wet your appetite.

Correct: Whet your appetite.

e.g., i.e.

The term *e.g.* is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *exempli gratia,* which means "for example."

The term *i.e.* is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *id est,* which means "that is."

It is often better to avoid confusion and use the English words—*for example* rather than e.g.

Either, Neither

Either and *neither* refer to a choice between two things. For a choice among more than two things, use *none* or *any*.

Incorrect: Neither of the four books suited him.

Correct: None of the four books suited him.

Incorrect: Either of the three books is the one I want.

Correct: Any of the three books will suit me.

Correct: Either of the two books will do.

Elicit, Illicit

Elicit is a verb that means to obtain, to draw forth, to bring out something hidden. *Illicit* is an adjective that describes something illegal.

Ellipses

Ellipses (…) are used to show the omission of words in quoted material, if the material is deleted within the sentence.

When the last part of a quoted sentence is omitted, it is followed by three spaced dots plus its punctuation. At the end of the quotation, only the punctuation is used.

Example: "Five hundred firemen ... attended the ball ...."

Example: Mr. Brown went on to say: "The shoe department functions smoothly ... many salespeople have won prizes for efficiency."

An ellipsis may also be used to indicate a thought expressed hesitantly:

Example: He said, "If ... if I do go with you, will you return early?"

Elliptical Clauses

Elliptical clauses are missing either a relative pronoun or something from the predicate in the second part of a comparison.

Example: The elderly women knew the tour guide could walk faster than they [could walk].

The missing parts of an elliptical clause (the other members of the tour) can be guessed from the context.

Email

Email can be spelled "email" or "e-mail" depending on your preference. The *e* stands for "electronic."

Other similar words often use a hyphen in their spelling:

Example: e-commerce, e-learning

Here are some tips for your business emails:

■   Do not use all caps in your email messages or subject lines.

- Use the active rather than passive voice in your messages.

- To quote from a previous email, use << (less than) and >> (greater than) on each side of the quote.

- Always type your response to a quote from a previous email below the quote or copy.

Embedded Questions

Embedded questions are questions within another statement. They function as a noun and follow the statement rather than the question order.

Example of question order: What day is it?

Example of statement order: I know what day it is.

An embedded question is not punctuated as a question because of its context within a sentence.

Example: I wonder who is hungry.

Em Dash

See *Dash*.

Emigrate, Immigrate

Emigrate means to leave your country for another.

Example: He was forced to emigrate from Mexico.

Immigrate means moving into a new country.

Example: They immigrated to California from South Korea.

Eminent, Imminent, Immanent

To correctly use these words in your writing, consider their definitions:

- *Eminent* is an adjective that means to be noteworthy, prominent, or famous.

- *Imminent* is an adjective that means something is about to take place.

- *Immanent* is an adjective that means to have existence only within the mind.

Emoticons

Emoticons are textual expressions created using punctuation marks and other keyboard symbols to express the mood or feelings of the writer.

Example: :-) is a smile.

Emoticons can be used in email messages but should not be used in any other business writing. Emoticons are often used in online chat rooms and to signal your reader that you are being sarcastic or making a statement with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. They can also be used to soften a message.

Use emoticons only when necessary, directly after the comments that require them. Do not use them in every message you write, and do not include them in your signature file.

Empathic Forms

Emphatic forms are created with the auxiliary verb *do* in the present or past tense along with the base form of the verb.

Example: They don't speak English anywhere in Europe.

Example: I don't believe you—they <u>do speak</u> [emphatic form that contradicts the first statement] English throughout Europe.

Emphatic forms are also known as **emphatic tenses** or **emphatic mood**.

Empathy, Sympathy

To correctly use these terms in your writing, consider their definitions:

- *Empathy* is a noun that means to understand what another person is feeling.

- *Sympathy* is a noun that means to share a common feeling of being sorry for someone.

En Dash

See *Dash*.

Endnotes

See *Footnotes, Endnotes*.

End Result

End result is a redundant term. Drop the *end* and use just *result*.

Endophora

Endophora is a literary technique where words or phrases, such as pronouns, point backward or forward to something else in the text.

Example: Because <u>he</u> [endophoric, refers to "Mike"] arrived early, Mike wanted to call his wife and ask <u>her</u> [refers to "wife"] to come to the airport early.

Engine, Motor

Engines are normally powered by combustion from sources such as oil, gasoline, coal, or natural gas.

Example: The engine in the car was very powerful.

Motors are usually electrically powered.

Example: The elevator motor had stopped working.

Enough, Not Enough

The adverbs *enough* and *not enough* usually take a postmodifier position.

Example: Is your food hot enough? This food is not hot enough.

Enough can also be an adjective. When it is used as an adjective, it comes before the noun and is often followed by an infinitive verb.

Example: The teacher didn't give us enough time to finish.

Enquire, Inquire

Both *enquire* and *inquire* mean to seek an answer, ask about, or to make an investigation. *Enquire* is the more common spelling in the United Kingdom.

Ensure, Assure, Insure

- *Ensure* is a verb that means to make certain.

- *Assure* is a verb that means to make someone confident about something or to make something safe.

- *Insure* means to issue an insurance policy.

Enthuse, Enthusiastic

Enthuse is used only as a colloquialism. For the formal language needed for business writing, use *to be enthusiastic*.

Incorrect: He was enthused about winning the award.

Correct: He was enthusiastic about winning the award.

Entitled

See *Titled, Entitled*.

Envelop, Envelope

■ *Envelop* means to enclose or wrap something with a covering.

■ *Envelope* is paper container for documents and mail.

Epanadiplosis

Epanadiplosis is a literary term when a word or phrase is repeated at the beginning and end of a phrase, clause, or sentence.

> **Example:** The king is dead, long live the king.

Epanalepsis

Epanalepsis is the repetition of a word or phrase in no particular order or position within a sentence, except that other words must appear between the repeated words or phrases. This technique is often used for emphasis and for rhythm.

> **Example:** "To each the boulders that have fallen to each."
> —Robert Frost, *Mending Wall*

> **Example:** "It will have blood, they say, it will have blood."
> —William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Epistemic Modality

Epistemic modality is a literary term that describes a sentence where the speaker's opinion is expressed using a modal verb (*can, could, will, would, shall, should, ought to, dare*, and *need*).

Example: It can be hot in Texas this time of year.

Epistrophe

Epistrophe is a stylistic technique where the writer ends different phrases, clauses, or sentences with the same word.

Example: "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny compared to what lies within us."—Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Epizeuxis

Epizeuxis is a literary technique where words or phrases are repeated without other words in between.

Example: "And my poor fool is hanged! No, no, no life! Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more, never, never, never, never!"—William Shakespeare, *King Lear*

Equally as Important

You can say something is *equally important,* but not *equally as important.* Drop the *as*.

Equations

Equations are statements used to express relationships in mathematics or chemistry.

Mathematical equations use mathematical symbols and letters of the alphabet to define conditions of equality, to indicate true or false, or to identify something. Letters of the alphabet are used to represent variables.

Example: $X + Y = 5$

Mathematical equations may become complex with various smaller equations grouped in brackets and positioned above and below other equations, separated by a line that represents fractional division.

Example: $\dfrac{X + \frac{1}{Y}}{A + B} = C$

Chemical equations are used to represent chemical formulas describing the reaction that occurs when different substances are mixed. The addition of one chemical to another is denoted using a plus sign. What the chemical mixture creates is separated from the result using a right arrow, which is read as "yields."

Example: $H_2 + O \rightarrow H_2O$

This formula can be read as "H two plus O yields H two O." The "2" that follows the "H" means that twice as much H (hydrogen), when mixed with O (oxygen), yields H_2O (water).

Ergative Verbs

Ergative verbs are verbs that change the state of the subject in a sentence.

Example: The needle burst the balloon.

There are several categories of ergative verbs:

■ Verbs that cause a change of state

Example: break, burst, form, heal, melt, tear, transform

■ Verbs used in cooking

Example: bake, boil, cook, broil, fry

■ Verbs that describe movement

Example: move, mow, shake, sweep, turn, walk

■ Verbs that involve vehicles

Example: drive, fly, reverse, run, sail

Ergative verbs allow a writer to omit the identity of the agent that caused the change while identifying the affected party or subject.

Example: The windshield was broken.

Essentially

See *Basically, Essentially, Totally.*

et al.

The term **el al.** comes from the Latin phrase *et alia,* which means "and others." This abbreviation is used much the same way as etc. when you don't want to name a complete list of people or things.

Example: The playwriting class included lessons on characterization, plot, pacing, conflict, et al., but it was very basic and not really designed for serious writers.

Et al. is punctuated with a period after *al* to indicate that it is abbreviated.

etc.

This is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *et cetera,* which means "and other things." Do not write "and etc." because the *and* is redundant.

It is better not to use this term in formal business writing. Instead, add a few more examples to close out a list.

Euphemisms

Euphemisms are words or phrases that substitute for language that is considered offensive, harsh, politically incorrect, or embarrassing.

Examples: passed away, died; peacekeeping forces, army; sanitation engineer, garbage collector

Everyday

Everyday is an adjective that can be confused for the adverbial phrase *every day.*

Example as an adjective: You don't wear your everyday clothes to a wedding.

Example as an adverb: I work out at the gym every day.

Everyone, Every One

Everyone is used when you are referring to all of the people or things in a group. The word can also mean everybody.

Example: Everyone enjoys a big holiday dinner.

Every one is used when referring to individual people or things in a group.

Example: Every one of the players received personal congratulations from the coach.

Every Time

Every time should always be written as two words.

Except, Unless

Except is a preposition used to introduce a prepositional phrase. *Unless* is an adverbial conjunction used to introduce a subordinate clause. *Except* and *unless* are not interchangeable.

Except may be used as a conjunction only when it's followed by the word *that;* however, that construction, although correct, is often awkward, and *unless* is preferable.

Incorrect: The horse cannot be entered in the race except that the judges allow it.

Correct: The horse cannot be entered in the race unless the judges allow it.

Excess, Access

See *Access, Excess*.

Exclamation Point

An **exclamation point** is used when making extravagant claims or to express deep feeling.

Example: Here is the finest car on the market!

Example: The announcement was unbelievable!

An exclamation point is used after a word or phrase charged with emotion.

Example: Quick! We don't want to be late.

An exclamation point is also used for double emphasis.

Example: I'm insulted by the innuendo!

Caution: For effective writing, show emotion through the choice of words and reserve exclamation points for only the strongest of feelings.

Exclamatory Sentence

An **exclamatory sentence** is used to express strong emotion or emphasis.

Example: I hate rainy days!

Exclamatory sentences often begin with *what* or *how*.

Example: What a wonderful surprise!

Example: How great you look!

Exclusive Adverbs

Exclusive adverbs focus attention on the words that follow and exclude all other possibilities.

Example: He ran the marathon <u>just</u> [excludes all other reasons for running the marathon] to prove he could do it.

Example: He joined Toastmasters <u>solely</u> [explains the only reason for joining] for the purpose of preparing for job interviews.

Other exclusive adverbs are *alone, exactly, merely,* and *simply.*

Existential *There*

The word *there* is often used as an adverb.

Example: She went there last week.

Example: You can't bring food in there.

There can also be used to start a sentence. When it does, it is referred to as the existential there.

Example: There is a bird in the tree.

Example: There was a flat tire on the truck.

The existential there is usually followed by a form of the verb *to be*.

Example: There were dogs loose in the neighborhood.

When the existential there is used in a question, it follows the verb.

Example: Is there a problem with your knee?

The two different uses of there can occur together in the same sentence.

Example: <u>There</u> [existential there] is a grocery store <u>there</u> [an adverb].

Exit

See *Quit, Exit*.

Exophoric

When referring to something that is not in the same text but that is understood by the reader or listener, the language is said to be **exophoric**.

Example: What is wrong with <u>that</u> [refers to something mentioned earlier in the text]?

Expect

Don't use *expect* to mean *think* or *suppose*.

Incorrect: I expect she was well received.

Correct: I suppose she was well received.

Correct: I expect you to be there at 8 a.m.

Expletive Constructions

Expletive constructions are sentences that begin with words like *there is,* *there are,* or *it is.*

Example: There are many poor children in the city who have expressed a desire to attend the free summer camp.

Expletive constructions include a pronoun that does not refer to a specific noun plus the verb *to be.* Expletive constructions are placed at the beginning of an independent clause.

Expletive constructions should be avoided because they deplete the energy of a sentence and are not needed to express the same idea.

Revision: Many poor children in the city have expressed a desire to attend the free summer camp.

Expository Writing

Expository writing is a type of composition that seeks to inform the reader. Expository writing tells what happened, explains how to do something, describes people and places, and provides facts. Examples of expository writing are:

- Cooking instructions.

- Driving directions.

- Instructions on how to perform a task.

There are five main types of expository writing:

- Sequence—used to list events in chronological order or provide step-by-step instructions

- Descriptive essay—to enable the reader to feel whatever is being described by including details about the five senses: sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste

- Classification—allows an author to arrange ideas or objects into categories

- ■ Comparison—allows the author to compare two or more choices and discuss similarities or differences

- ■ Cause and effect—identifies why something occurred and the result of the occurrence

Extranet

See *Internet, Intranet, Extranet.*

Extraposition

Extraposition is a construction where the subject of a sentence is postponed until the end of the sentence. It is a stylistic technique that disrupts the normal declarative order.

Declarative order: Two security officers were inside the building.

Extraposition: Inside the building were two security officers.

Declarative order: Beautiful antiques were inside the lobby.

Extraposition: Inside the lobby were beautiful antiques.

When a sentence is introduced by *it*, the construction can also be extraposed.

Example: It's a good idea to get in line early.

Example: It's not surprising he got an internship.

In some sentences, extraposition is not just stylistic; it's required:

Extraposition: It seems that she'll be early again.

Declarative order: That she'll be early again it seems.

F

Factitive Verbs

Verbs like *make, choose, judge, elect, select*, and *name* are **factitive verbs**. These verbs can take two objects.

> **Example:** The people elected <u>Barack Obama</u> [object] <u>president of the United States</u> [second complement].

Faint

See *Feint, Faint.*

Fair, Fare

Fare, as a verb, means to go, to carry, or to pass through.

> **Example:** How did you fare on your trip to Scotland?

Fare, as a noun, can also mean an assortment of food or any material provided for consumption, the price charged for transportation, or a paying passenger on a taxi or bus.

Fair has a variety of meanings:

- Adjective—fresh, smooth, pure, clean

- Adjective—not dark

- Adjective—not stormy

- Adjective—impartial and honest

- Adjective—done according to the rules

> **Example:** That's fair.

■   Noun—a gathering of buyers and sellers for trade or for a competitive exhibition.

Example: The State Fair of Texas is held every year in October.

FANBOYS

Coordinating conjunctions can be remembered using the acronym **FANBOYS:** for-and-nor-but-or-yet-so. A comma is often used when a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses.

Example: Eric wanted to play in the band, but he also wanted to pursue a career in engineering.

Farther, Further

Farther shows a specific, quantifiable distance.

Example: I walked farther than he did.

Further shows degree or extent.

Example: He will go further with your help than without it.

Faze, Phase

Faze is a verb that means to disturb. Faze is often used in sentences where something did not affect someone or something.

Example: The shouts from the audience did not faze the speaker.

Phase can be a noun or verb.

■   As a noun, it refers to a particular cycle or appearance.

Example: The astronomer eagerly awaited a new phase of the moon.

■   As a verb, it means to carry out a plan or introduce something in stages.

Example: The plan was to phase in the new software over a period of several months.

Feint, Faint

Feint can be either a noun or a verb.

■   When used as a noun, *feint* means to distract attention from the real center of attention. A *feint* often refers to a battlefield strategy that involves a diversionary attack to distract the enemy from the real intended point of attack.

■   When used as a verb, *feint* means to make a fake move during a battle or confrontation.

Faint can be used as an adjective, verb, or noun.

■   When used an adjective, *faint* means weakness or lacking vigor or distinctness.

Example: There was a faint red glow in the sky.

■   When used as verb, *faint* means to lose consciousness temporarily.

Example: Candace fainted in the middle of her wedding.

■   When used as a noun, *faint* refers to the medical condition of fainting.

Example: The patient went into a faint.

Female, Woman

When referring to human beings, use the word *woman* rather than *female*.

Incorrect: A female walked down the hall and entered her office.

Correct: A woman walked down the hall and entered her office.

When used as an adjective, it is often best to use *female* rather than *woman*.

Example: female firefighter, female astronaut

Fewer, Less

See *Less, Fewer.*

Few, A Few

There can be a big difference between *few* and *a few*. The following example implies that Linda has some biographies in her collection.

Example: Linda has a few biographies among the books in her library.

This example implies that Linda does *not* have many biographies in her collection.

Example: Linda has few biographies among the books in her library.

Figuratively

See *Literally, Figuratively.*

Figure of Speech

A **figure of speech** is a form of expression where a word or words are used to convey something different from their literal meaning.

Example: As we entered the restaurant, Evelyn said she was <u>starving</u> [not dying from hunger, just very hungry].

Other figures of speech are *break a leg, butterflies in your stomach, raining cats and dogs, got your back.*

There are a variety of classifications for figures of speech. Here are some examples:

- Alliteration
- Anaphora
- Antithesis
- Apostrophe
- Assonance
- Chiasmus
- Euphemism
- Hyperbole
- Irony
- Litotes
- Metaphor
- Metonymy
- Onomatopoeia
- Oxymoron
- Paradox
- Personification
- Pun
- Simile
- Synechdoche
- Understatement

Figures

Figures are drawings, pictures, or charts that appear as illustrations in a manuscript. Figures should complement the subject matter in the text.

Provide a brief introductory sentence to introduce a figure.

Example: The following pie chart shows the various classifications of users for the new software.

Include a short caption below the figure. Even if a figure repeats later in the same document, repeat the caption. Do not use end punctuation for the caption, unless it is a complete sentence. Figures should be numbered sequentially throughout the document, with the figure number included in the caption. Figure numbering can be 1, 2, 3 or include a chapter or section number, such as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and so on.

Example: Figure 1. Software user pie chart

Finite Verbs

Finite verbs are verbs that have a subject and can stand on their own as complete sentences. Finite verbs show tense and number.

Example: I [subject] <u>drive</u> [finite verb] a car.

Finite verbs can be contrasted with **nonfinite verbs**, which have no subject, tense, or number. Nonfinite verbs use the following forms:

■ Infinitive: to go

■ Gerund: going

■ Participle: gone

First Conditional

A **first conditional** sentence consists of an if clause and a main clause. The first conditional is used to describe things that may happen.

When the if clause occurs first, a comma is required.

When the if clause is after the main clause, no comma is required.

Example: You will be sleepy the next day if you stay up all night.

Fix, Situation

Fix means to repair. Don't use it to mean a bad situation.

Incorrect: She is in a desperate fix.

Correct: She is desperate because of her present situation.

Flair, Flare

Flair is a noun that means a skill, talent, or natural ability. *Flair* can also mean a unique attractive quality or style.

Example: He has a flair for doing hair.

Flare can be a noun or a verb.

As a noun, *flare* is a fire, a bright light, or a burning safety warning device.

As a verb, *flare* means to become excited or angry or to shine with a sudden light.

Flesch-Kincaid Index

The **Flesch-Kincaid Index** is a measurement used to determine how easy or difficult a document is to read. The Index gives the years of education required to understand a document.

The following formula is used to calculate the Flesch-Kincaid Index:

$$0.39 \times \text{Average number of words in a sentence}$$
$$+\ 11.8 \times \text{Average number of syllables per word}$$
$$-\ 15.59$$

Flier, Flyer

A *flier* is a noun that means a person who flies. A *flyer* is a one- or two-sided advertising notice.

Focus Adverb

A **focus adverb** is used to limit the context of a sentence or to add additional context.

Example: He got a ticket <u>just</u> [focus adverb] for going five miles over the speed limit.

Example: He got a ticket <u>in addition to</u> [focus adverb] a long lecture from the police officer.

Fog Index

The **Fog Index** is a test to determine how easy or difficult a document is to read. The official name is the "Gunning Fog Index." The Fog Index uses the following formula:

Reading level (school grade) = (Average number of words in sentences
+ Percentage of words of three or more syllables)
× 0.4

The result of the formula is the Gunning Fog Index, which represents the number of years of education that a reader needs to have in order to understand the document.

Short sentences with small words score better than long sentences with complicated words. Business documents should have a Gunning Fog Index between 10 and 15. If the Index exceeds 18, the document should be rewritten.

Font, Typeface

A *typeface* refers to the design of printed letters on paper or in a computer display.

Example: Helvetica, Times New Roman, Arial

A typeface is composed of different *fonts*.

Example: The Times New Roman typeface has a family of fonts: Times New Roman, Times New Roman Italic, Times New Roman Bold.

Foot, Feet

Foot is singular; *feet* is plural.

Incorrect: The room is twelve foot long.

Correct: The room is twelve feet long.

Footnotes, Endnotes

Footnotes are comments placed at the bottom of a page of text to explain a concept, define a term, or provide a reference.

A superscript number (for example, [1])is added after the text in the document that the footnote references. The footnote is numbered with the same superscript number at the bottom of the page.

Example: This is an example of a footnote reference[1].

Example: [1]This is a sample footnote.

Endnotes are similar to footnotes, but they appear at the end of a chapter, a section, or the document.

Forego, Forgo

Forego means to go before. *Forgo* means to do without something.

Example: After finishing dinner and feeling a bit too full, he decided to forgo dessert.

Foreign Words and Phrases

Non-English words and phrases, such as *etc., et al., de facto,* or *ad hoc,* should be avoided in most business writing.

Avoid the use of Latin abbreviations when a normal English phrase can be used instead. See Table 2.16.

Table 2.16 Latin Abbreviations and Their English Counterparts

Use …	Instead of …
for example	e.g.
that is	i.e.
namely	viz.
therefore	ergo
and so forth	etc.
and others	et al.
pseudo	de facto
special or specialized	ad hoc

Forever, For Ever

Forever is normally written as one word in the United States.

For ever is normally written as two words in the United Kingdom.

For, Fore, Four

To correctly use these words in your writing, consider their definitions:

- *For* is a preposition that is used to indicate the purpose, goal, or recipient of an activity.

- *Fore* can be an adverb or adjective that means something in front of something else.

- *Four* is the number.

Formatting

Formatting a business document varies depending on the type of document. The most common formatting items are:

- Art or Figures
- Lists
- Captions
- Margins and margin notes
- Callouts
- Page breaks
- Cross-references
- Tables
- Headings
- Notes and tips
- Subheadings
- Footnotes or endnotes
- Line spacing and breaks

All these formatting items are covered elsewhere in this book.

Formulas

Formulas are used in mathematics and science to express information symbolically.

Example: $E = mc^2$

Writing formulas in business documents with a word processor may involve inserting special symbols and changing to superscript or subscript fonts.

Some of the latest word processors include the ability to insert and format complex formulas by using the Equation function.

Example: $(x + a)^n = \sum_{k=a}^{n} \binom{n}{k} x^k a^{n-k}$

Forward, Forwards, Foreword

Forward and *forwards* can both be used; however, *forward* is more formal. This usage also applies to *toward* and *towards* and *backward* and *backwards*.

A *foreword* is an introductory section of a book.

Fractions

Fractions can be written in words or decimals depending on the context. Avoid using numbers separated by a slash mark, unless you are writing an equation.

Hyphenate fractions written as words.

Example: one-half, two-thirds, five-sixteenths

When writing fractions as decimal points, insert a zero before the decimal point for fractions that are less than one.

Example: 0.25 inch

The unit of measure should be singular for amounts less than one, except zero, which is plural.

Example: 0.75 inch, 0 inches, 10 inches

Fragments

See *Sentence Fragments.*

Full Time, Full-time

When used as a measure of time that denotes a complete work week, *full time* is a noun and is written as two words without a hyphen.

Example: My job requires that I work full time Monday through Friday.

When used as an adjective to mean being employed full time, a hyphen is used.

Example: She is looking for a full-time job.

Further

See *Farther, Further.*

Fused Sentences

Fused sentences are often referred to as "run-on sentences." Fused sentences have two parts that both can stand on their own as two independent clauses.

When two independent clauses are connected only by a comma, this is known as a comma-splice and the result is a run-on or fused sentence.

Example: The weather is hot, let's go swimming.

To avoid a comma-splice and run-on sentence:

- Connect the two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction, such as *and, or, but, for, so, yet,* or *nor.*

  Example: The weather is hot, so let's go swimming.

- Add a period to each of the independent clauses.

  Example: The weather is hot. Let's go swimming.

- Link the clauses using a semicolon.

  Example: The weather is hot; let's go swimming.

- Rewrite the sentences into one independent clause.

  Example: The weather is hot enough for swimming.

- Rewrite the sentences so that one of the independent clauses becomes a dependent clause.

  Example: Since the weather is hot, let's go swimming.

■ Use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb (*thus, otherwise, moreover, also, anyway, besides, furthermore, incidentally*) to separate the two independent clauses. Add a comma after the conjunctive adverb.

Example: The weather is hot; furthermore, let's go swimming.

Future Perfect

To describe an event that has not happened but is expected to happen before another event, the **future perfect** tense is used.

The future perfect is composed of a subject + *shall* or *will have* + the past participle of the verb.

Example: I [subject] <u>will have</u> already <u>delivered</u> [will have + past participle] the presentation by the time your plane lands.

Future Perfect Progressive

The **future perfective progressive** structure is used when an unfinished action will reach a certain stage. The form of the future perfect progressive is *will have been*.

Example: By this time next year, I will have been married half my life.

Future Progressive

To indicate action that will be taking place in the future as a part of normal events, the **future progressive** tense is used. The future progressive tense is composed of *will be* + the *-ing* form of the verb.

Example: I will be leaving for Detroit in the morning.

G

Gage, Gauge

Gage is an alternative spelling for *gauge*.

A *gage* is a measuring instrument that is used to measure the amount or the position of something. Gages are found in cars, airplanes, and industrial plants, among other places.

Gage can be a verb that means to estimate quantities or time.

> **Example:** What do you gage the depth of the river to be?

Gage can also be a noun that is used to measure things, such as the distance between railroad rails, the thickness of wire, and the size of a shotgun's barrel.

Gender

In many languages, such as Spanish, French, and Italian, there is a grammatical category for **gender**: masculine, feminine, or neuter.

The only times that gender is indicated in English is when certain nouns refer to a male or female animal or person.

> **Example:** lion (male), lioness (female); waiter (male), waitress (female); actor (male), actress (female)

Genitive Marker

When nouns take an *'s* to indicate possession, this is called a **genitive marker**.

Don't confuse the genitive marker with the *'s* that is added to contracted verbs.

> **Example:** Horace's [Horace is] going to the store.

Gerund

A **gerund** is a verb form ending in *-ing* that acts as a noun.

Example: <u>Walking</u> [gerund] in the street after dark can be dangerous.

Gerunds are usually accompanied by other words that make up a **gerund phrase**.

Example: <u>Walking in the street after dark</u> [gerund phrase] can be dangerous.

Because gerunds and gerund phrases are nouns, they can be used just like nouns:

■ As a subject

Example: <u>Being president</u> is a difficult job.

■ As an objective of a verb

Example: He didn't really like <u>being poor.</u>

■ As an objective of a preposition

Example: He read a book <u>about being careful.</u>

Gigabyte

A *gigabyte* equals 1,024 megabytes, or 1,073,741,824 bytes. The abbreviation for gigabyte is GB (not G or Gbyte).

The first time that you use *gigabyte* in a document, spell out the word and put the abbreviation in parentheses.

When used as a measurement of computing speed, leave a space between the number and the abbreviation.

Example: The computer has 2 GB of memory.

When the measurement is used as an adjective preceding a noun, use a hyphen.

Example: Are those 1-GB or 2-GB memory chips?

Gigahertz

Gigahertz is a measurement of computer speed. One gigahertz is equal to one billion cycles per second. Gigahertz is abbreviated as GHz.

The first time you use *gigahertz* in a technical document, spell out the word and put the abbreviation in parentheses. Leave a space between the number and the GHz.

Example: The computer has 2 GHz of processing speed.

If the number and abbreviation are used as an adjective preceding a noun, use a hyphen.

Example: Is that a 2-GHz processor in your laptop?

Glossary

A **glossary** is an alphabetical list of words or phrases and their definitions.

Example: RAM—Random access memory

A glossary is useful in reports and other long documents when readers may be unfamiliar with the terminology being used. A glossary usually appears at the end of the document.

A glossary is usually introduced by the same heading level used for other chapters or sections in the document.

The content of a glossary explains concepts that are unique to a particular business, industry, or technology.

Gone, Went

The past participle of *went* is *gone*.

Example: I went to the store.

Example: I should have gone to the store.

Good, Well

Good is an adjective and *well* is an adverb. When describing an action verb, the only choice is the adverb *well*.

Example: He speaks well.

When using a linking verb or a verb that has to do with the five human senses, use the adjective *good*.

Example: You smell good today.

Many writers use *well* after linking verbs related to health because *well* is related to wellness.

Example: How are you doing? I am well, thank you.

Got, Gotten

Don't use *got,* when you can use *have, has,* or *must*.

Incorrect: I got a new car.

Correct: I have a new car.

Correct: He has a new job.

Incorrect (colloquial): I've got to stop at his house.

Correct: I must stop at his house. … I have to stop at his house.

Gotten is an obsolete term. Do not use it; replace it with *got*.

Grammatical Hierarchy

Grammatical hierarchy is a way of studying language by classifying it as sentences, clauses, phrases, and words. Consider the following example of a grammatical hierarchy:

- Sentences consist of one or more clauses. Sentences are at the top of the grammatical hierarchy because they are the largest unit.

- Clauses consist of one or more phrases.

- Phrases consist of one or more words. Words are at the lowest level of the grammatical hierarchy. (Morphology is the study of how words are constructed.)

Gray, Grey

Gray is the American spelling; *grey* is the spelling in the United Kingdom.

Guess

Don't use *guess* when you really mean *think*.

Incorrect: I guess you are right.

Correct: I think you are right.

Correct: In the word game, Marcus was the first to guess correctly.

H

Handicap, Disability

A *handicap* is a problem that can be remedied, whereas a *disability* is permanent problem.

■ People who have disabilities prefer the word *disability* to *handicap*.

■ The phrase "people with disabilities" is preferred over "disabled people."

Hard Disk, Hard Drive

A *hard disk* is the actual disk inside a hard drive where data are stored in a computer system. Refer to the storage device inside most personal computers as a "hard drive" or "hard disk drive." When using these terms, consider these tips:

■ *Hard disk* and *hard drive* are always written as two words.

■ Do not hyphenate *hard disk* or *hard drive*.

Headings and Subheadings

Headings are used to organize sections of content and make it easy for readers to locate information. Consider these tips when using headings and subheadings:

■ Headings should convey information about the content that follows. The text that follows the heading should stand on its own and not continue where the heading left off.

Incorrect:
Printing the Document [Heading]
This can be done from the File menu by clicking Print.

Correct:
Printing the Document [Heading]
To print a document, click the File menu, then click Print.

- Avoid headings that require two or more lines of text.

- Avoid using articles to begin a heading.

  Incorrect: The Print Dialog

  Correct: Print Dialog

- Use the gerund form of verbs rather than the infinitive form when using headings to describe tasks (the *-ing* form instead of *to*).

  Incorrect: To Format Your Text

  Correct: Formatting Your Text

- Avoid terms like *Using, Working with*

- Use noun phrases for headings that do not involve a particular task.

  Example: Exhaust System Components

- Headings should not be used as a lead-in to a lone list or figure.

- Use widow and orphan formatting controls on page layouts to prevent a heading from appearing at the bottom of one page with content following on the next page.
  - Include at least two lines of text with a heading that appears at the bottom of a page.

Headings can be formatted on different levels with different text styles for each level. Consider these tips for heading levels:

- Use the same typography for a given level.

- Different typefaces and font styles are okay for each level.

- Level-one headings are for general information.
  - If material that starts with a level-one heading contains subsections, the subsections should have level-two headings.

- Keep headings on the same level parallel in their wording.

Example: Formatting Your Text, Adding Styles, Printing Your Document

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- First-level headings should appear on a new page.
  - Use all caps for first-level headings.
  - First-level headings can be centered on the page or aligned left.
  - Separate text that follows a first-level heading by three blank lines.
- Second-level headings should use bold or underlined styles.
  - Second-level headings should be aligned left.
  - Leave one blank line before text that follows a second-level heading.
- Subsequent levels of headings can use bold, italic, or underlined styles.
  - Use standard paragraph spacing for the text that follows subsequent-level headings.

Helping Verbs

See *Linking Verbs*.

Hendiatris

Hendiatris is a figure of speech where three words are used to emphasize one idea.

Example: Wine, women, and song

Example: Eat, drink, and be merry.

Hendiatris is often used to create mottos for organizations.

Example: The motto at West Point is "Duty, Honor, Country."

Heteronyms

Words that are spelled the same but that have different meanings and are pronounced differently are **heteronyms**. Heteronyms are also known as **heterophones**. Table 2.17 lists common heteronyms.

Table 2.17 Common Heteronyms

Word	Part of Speech	Definition
Abuse	Noun	Bad treatment
	Verb	To treat badly
Advocate	Verb	To argue for someone
	Noun	A person who speaks on behalf of someone or something
Agape	Adjective	Wide open
	Noun	Asexual, spiritual love
Alternate	Adjective	Other
	Verb	To take turns
Appropriate	Adjective	Suitable
	Verb	To set apart for
Attribute	Noun	A characteristic
	Verb	To associate ownership
Bass	Noun	Low in pitch
	Noun	A fish
Blessed	Adjective	Having divine aid
	Verb	Past tense of bless
Bow	Noun	A stringed weapon
	Verb	To bend in respect
	Noun	Front of a ship

(continues)

Table 2.17 *(continued)*

Word	Part of Speech	Definition
Buffet	Noun	Self-service food
	Verb	To hit or strike
Close	Verb	To shut
	Adjective	Nearby
Compact	Verb	To compress
	Adjective	Small
Conduct	Noun	Acton
	Verb	To lead
Console	Verb	To provide comfort
	Noun	A control unit
Content	Noun	Information
	Adjective	Satisfied
Convict	Verb	To find guilty
	Noun	Someone who has been convicted
Desert	Noun	An arid region of the world
	Verb	To abandon
Does	Noun	Plural of doe (female deer)
	Verb	Form of do
Dove	Noun	A bird
	Verb	Past tense of dive
Entrance	Noun	Doorway
	Verb	To delight
House	Noun	Residential building
	Verb	To place in residence

Intimate	Verb	To suggest
	Adjective	Very close
Invalid	Adjective	Incorrect
	Noun	A person with a disability
Laminate	Verb	To assemble from thin sheets glued together
	Noun	Material formed by laminating
Lead	Verb	To guide
	Noun	A metal
Learned	Adjective	Having much learning
	Verb	Past tense of learn
Live	Verb	To be alive
	Adjective	Having life
Minute	Adjective	Small
	Noun	Unit of time
Moped	Noun	Small motorcycle
	Verb	Past tense of mope
Multiply	Verb	To increase
	Adjective	In multiple ways
Number	Noun	A numeral
	Adjective	More numb
Object	Noun	A thing
	Verb	To protest
Polish	Verb	To shine
	Adjective	Native of Poland

(continues)

Table 2.17 *(continued)*

Word	Part of Speech	Definition
Present	Verb	To reveal
	Noun	A gift
Primer	Noun	A book that covers basic content.
	Noun	An undercoat of paint
Produce	Verb	To make
	Noun	Fruits and vegetables
Project	Noun	An undertaking
	Verb	To cast an image
Read	Verb	Present tense
	Verb	Past tense
Rebel	Verb	To resist
	Noun	One who rebels
Record	Noun	Physical information
	Verb	To make a record
Refuse	Noun	Garbage
	Verb	To decline
Resign	Verb	To quit
	Verb	To sign again
Resume	Verb	To start again
	Noun	A written history of employment
Row	Verb	To paddle a boat
	Noun	An argument
Sake	Noun	Benefit
	Noun	Rice wine

Sewer	Noun	Drainage pipes
	Noun	One who sews
Shower	Noun	Rain
	Noun	One who shows
Sin	Noun	A moral error
	Noun	Abbreviation for sine
Sow	Verb	To plant seeds
	Noun	Female pig
Subject	Noun	Topic
	Verb	To cause to undergo
Tear	Noun	Liquid from crying
	Verb	To separate
Wicked	Adjective	Bad or evil
	Verb	Past tense of wick
Wind	Noun	Air movement
	Verb	To tighten a spring
Wound	Verb	Past tense of wind
	Noun	An injury

Highlighting

Highlighting is a technique for changing the font or font style for a word or phrase to add emphasis. Techniques include using italics, bold, all caps, underlines, and different sizes and colors. Using too much highlighting is distracting.

In business and technical documents, highlighting is typically used:

- To emphasize the word *not* in statements

- In headings

- For software commands, menus, fields, and buttons

- For keyboard or mouse buttons

- In special notices such as warnings, cautions, or dangers

- For buttons on computer hardware

- As labels in figures

- In titles for a table

- For column headings in a table

Hispanic, Latino, Chicano

See *Chicano, Latino, Hispanic*.

Hit

When writing about keyboard actions, use *type* or *press* instead of *hit*.

Homographs

Homographs are similar to **homophones** and **homonyms** in that they are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings.

Example: I'm going to read the book.

Example: I read that book last week.

Example: The wind blew through the trees.

Example: You have to wind the old clock.

Homonyms

Homonyms are words that are pronounced the same, spelled differently, and have different meanings. Table 2.18 contains a list of commonly confused homonyms.

Table 2.18 Commonly Confused Homonyms

altar	alter	
born	bourn	borne
breach	breech	
caret	carrot	
compliment	complement	
council	counsel	
cubicle	cubical	
discrete	discreet	
dual	duel	
foreword	forward	
led	lead	
loath	loathe	
mettle	metal	
peace	piece	
piqued	peaked	
principal	principle	
rein	reign	rain
ringer	wringer	
role	roll	
stationary	stationery	
tick	tic	
tow	toe	
vice	vise	
waved	waived	
yoke	yolk	

Homophones

Words that are spelled differently but sound the same are **homophones**.

Example: to, two, too; birth, berth

Hypallage

Hypallage is a literary technique that involves reversing the normal relation of two words.

Transferred epithet is a type of hypallage that involves applying an adjective to the wrong word in a sentence.

Example: "the winged sound of whirling" [instead of "the sound of whirling wings"]—Aristophanes, *Birds*

Hyperbaton

Hyperbaton is a figure of speech that occurs when two words that normally go together are separated for effect.

Example: "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put [instead of "put up with"]."—Winston Churchill

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Example: "Object there was none. Passion there was none." —Edgar Allan Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart*

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech that occurs in exaggerated statements that should rarely be taken seriously. Hyperbole is used to create emphasis and to be humorous.

Hyperbole often involves an overstatement or understatement.

Example: I have a million things I should be doing right now.

Example: I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse.

Example: I nearly died laughing.

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are text or buttons that allow a user to click and access another document or a different place within the same document.

Hyperlinks are often found in Web sites and online documents. One of the most common hyperlinks is a Web address (URL).

Hyperlinks that link within the same document are sometimes called **bookmarks**. Text hyperlinks within a document are normally highlighted with either bold, underlining, or a different color.

Hyphens

Hyphens are used to join words, to show a connection between words, or to separate the syllables for a single word when splitting a word for a line break. Hyphens are used for various purposes.

Line Breaks

■   Break closed compounds between the words.

Example: peace-/keeping

■   Break hyphenated compound words after the hyphen.

Example: user-/friendly

■   Break multisyllable words at the end of a line.
   ■   Don't break one-syllable words.
   ■   Don't break a word if just one letter is left on either line.

Substitute Words

If a word repeats with a different modifier in a sentence, the repetition can make the sentence sound long and difficult. One way to solve this problem is to use a hyphen.

Example: We both over- and underestimated the amount of driving time for the trip.

Example: The football team used a three-, four-, and five-man line.

Example: Most computers today have either a 32- or 64-bit processor.

Pronunciation

You can use hyphens when writing dialogue to achieve a particular pronunciation in the reader's mind.

Example: "S-s-s-s" said the snake.

Example: "Mr. S-s-smith," he stuttered, "May I p-p-please have some w-w-water?"

Compound Adjectives

Compound adjectives are groups of words or phrases used in a sentence to describe a noun.

Example: It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Example: I wouldn't touch that line with a ten-foot pole.

Example: The computer's processor has a 512-single-byte bus.

Example: Eight-month-old kittens were given away.

Do not use hyphens when the first word of a compound adjective ends in *-ly*.

Incorrect: It was a highly-motivated student body.

Correct: It was a highly motivated student body.

Incorrect: It was a beautifully-made sweater.

Correct: It was a beautifully made sweater.

Hyphenated Compound Words

The following is a list of commonly used hyphenated compounds:

- all-encompassing
- all-knowing
- anti-inflammatory
- back-check
- cold-shoulder
- community-wide
- co-worker
- cross-fertilize
- dead-on
- de-emphasize
- do-able
- drop-kick
- ex-employee
- ex-husband
- multi-item
- non-native
- nuclear-free
- off-color
- pre-engineered
- president-elect
- self-doubts
- self-esteem
- stand-in
- time-out
- water-resistant

Hyphenated Numbers

Consider the following hyphenation tips when working with numbers:

■ Written-out numbers of less than one hundred are hyphenated.

Example: thirty-three

■ Hundreds and thousands are not hyphenated.

Example: six hundred thousand

■ When modifying a noun, numbers are hyphenated, as are any compound adjectives.

Example: five-thousand-foot mountain

Example: three-foot rule

■ Fractions of less than one are hyphenated.

Example: one-third

Example: three-quarters

■ Mixed numbers are not hyphenated between the whole number and the fraction, both when written as words and figures.

Example: one and one-half

Example: 1 1/2

■ Do not write one part of the fraction as a numeral and the other as a word.

Incorrect: 1 fourth-inch bolt

Correct: one-fourth-inch bolt

Hyponyms

Hyponyms are words that are in categories of other words.

Example: Red, scarlet, and crimson are all hyponyms of red.

Example: Red, green, and blue are all hyponyms of color.

Hypophora

Hypophora is a figure of speech where the writer or speaker asks a question and then answers it.

Example: "What is George Bush doing about our economic problems? He has raised taxes on people driving pickup trucks and lowered taxes on people riding in limousines."—Bill Clinton

Hypothetical Questions

A **hypothetical question** is a question that is based on assumptions instead of facts and that is intended to elicit an opinion. Hypothetical questions are often asked of politicians and during court trials.

Hysteron Proteron

Hysteron proteron is a literary technique that calls attention to an important idea by placing it first and then having a secondary idea direct attention back to the first.

Hysteron proteron involves an inversion of the normal sequence of events for effect or humor.

Example: Put on your shoes and socks, but not necessarily in that order.

Idiolect

Personal language, including the words people use and other characteristics of how they speak or write, is called their **idiolect**. Idiolect is similar to **dialect**; however, dialect relates to the way a group of people speak or write.

Idioms

An **idiom** is a phrase that is easily understood by the speakers of a particular language; however, the meaning is different from the normal meaning of the words.

Example: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Example: a chip on your shoulder

Example: a drop in the bucket

i.e., e.g.

See *e.g., i.e.*

If, When, Whether

If is often used in casual speaking. *If* is used when there is a condition.

Incorrect: If you don't know <u>if</u> [should be whether] the front door is locked, you better get up and check it.

Correct: If you don't change the oil in your car, your engine won't last long.

Whether should be used in formal writing.

■ When discussing two possible alternatives, *whether* should be used.

Example: It's important to find out whether your guests prefer red or white wine.

■ *Whether* is used when there is uncertainty about the possible outcome.
  ■ Do not use *whether or not* if there is uncertainty about the outcome.
  ■ Only use *whether or not* to mean *under any circumstances*.

When is used when the passage of time is involved in the condition.

Example: You can finish your homework when we finish discussing this matter.

Illicit, Elicit

See *Elicit, Illicit*.

Illusion, Allusion

See *Allusion, Illusion*.

Illustrations

See *Figures*.

I, Me, Myself

Speakers and writers are often confused on when to use *I*, *me*, and *myself*, especially in sentences involving other people.

■ Use the word *I* when speaking of yourself as the subject of a sentence.

Example: I live north of Atlanta.

■ Use the word *me* when someone else is doing something to or for you.

Example: John threw the football to me.

■ Use the word *myself* only when you are doing something to yourself.

Example: Rather than taking the train, I'm going to drive myself to work today.

When another person is added to a sentence and there is a choice between *I, me,* or *myself,* one good test is to remove the other person and see if the sentence makes sense.

Incorrect: Jennifer and me live north of Atlanta. [Remove "Jennifer": Me lives north of Atlanta.]

Correct: Jennifer and I live north of Atlanta.

Incorrect: John threw the football to Jennifer and I. [Remove "Jennifer": John threw the football to I.]

Correct: John threw the football to Jennifer and me.

Incorrect: Rather than taking the train, I'm going to drive Jennifer and me to work today. [Remove "Jennifer": I'm going to drive me to work today.]

Correct: Rather than taking the train, I'm going to drive Jennifer and myself to work today.

Immanent, Eminent

See *Eminent, Imminent, Immanent*.

Immigrate, Emigrate

See *Emigrate, Immigrate*.

Imperative Mood

Imperative mood is an attitude in writing or speaking that involves giving directives, orders, or strong suggestions.

Example: Get out of my office!

Example: Get those reports in my office by noon.

Imperative sentences do not have subjects. The pronoun *you* is understood to be the subject.

Questions are often tagged to the end of imperative sentences.

Example: Leave your shoes outside, will you?

Imply, Infer

To correctly use these words in your writing, consider these tips:

- If you are giving someone else an idea, you can *imply*.

- If you are receiving an idea from someone else, you can *infer*.

- When deciding whether to use imply or infer, use *imply* when something is suggested without being clearly stated.

- Use *infer* when trying to arrive at a decision based on facts.

Inanimate Nouns

Inanimate nouns are nouns that identify nonliving things. Inanimate nouns identify places, things, and ideas.

Example: Austin, Texas, car, house, ceremony, speech

Inaugurate

Don't use *inaugurate* in place of *started* or *began.*

Incorrect: The program inaugurated on August 1.

Correct: The program began on August 1.

Correct: The president of the United States was inaugurated on January 4.

Inchoative Verbs

Inchoative verbs describe states of change.

Example: The strawberries have ripened.

Example: She has aged a lot.

Indefinite Articles

The determiners *a* and *an* are **indefinite articles**. Indefinite articles are used before singular nouns that have a plural form.

Example: a tree, a boy, an apple

The indefinite article *a* is used before consonant sounds and *an* is used before vowel sounds.

Example: a woman, a display, an umbrella, an intellectual

Indefinite Pronouns

The **indefinite pronouns** *everybody, anybody, somebody, all, each, every, some, none,* and *one* do not substitute for specific nouns but act as nouns themselves.

One of the problems with the indefinite pronoun *everybody* is that it seems to be plural but takes a singular verb.

Example: Everybody is coming.

The indefinite pronoun *none* can be either singular or plural. It is usually always plural except when something else in the sentence forces it to be singular.

Example: None of the students are failing.

Example: None of the water is salty.

Some can be singular or plural depending on whether it refers to something countable or not countable.

Example: Some of the whipped cream is gone.

Example: Some of the footballs are not being used.

Some indefinite pronouns also double as determiners, such as *enough, few, fewer, less, little, many, much, several, more, most, all, both, every, each, any, either, neither, none,* and *some*.

Independent Clauses

An **independent clause** could stand by itself as a sentence. When an independent clause is included in a sentence, it is usually separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

Example: Charlie didn't mean to run away, but he did it because he was angry.

In this example, two independent clauses are separated by a comma and a coordinating conjunction *but*. If the word *but* was missing, this example would be a comma splice.

Being able to recognize when a clause is independent is essential to knowing when to use commas, thereby avoiding sentence fragments and run-on sentences.

Two independent clauses can be combined into a single thought. Clauses can be combined three different ways:

■   With coordination—using coordinating conjunctions such as *and, but, or, nor, for, yet,* and sometimes *so.* By using a coordinating conjunction, you avoid monotony and what is often called "primer language," simple sentence constructions.

Example: The book was long, but I couldn't put it down.

■   With subordination—turning one of the independent clauses into a subordinate element using a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun. When the clause begins with a subordinating word, it transforms into a dependent clause.

Example: Linda never liked to fly in airplanes, because she was afraid of heights.

■   By using a semicolon—with or without the help of a conjunctive adverb. Semicolons should be used only when the two independent clauses are very closely related and nicely balanced in length and content.

Example: Sheena is a very pretty girl; she looks like an angel.

Index

Indexes are often created for large business documents and included at the end of the manuscript. Indexes alphabetically list keywords with either the page numbers where they can be found or hyperlinks to the pages in online documents. Some word processing software, such as Microsoft Word, creates an index automatically; however, you must manually omit unneeded words from the index.

When creating an index, consider these tips:

- All headings and subheadings in a document should be included in the index.

- Also identify and include keywords. (Word processing software allows you to mark keywords throughout the document.)

- Consolidate entries that are similar with common phrasing.

  Example: Print Documents, Printing Documents, Using the Print Function all become *Printing.*

- A detailed index may include synonym entries with a *See* reference to the actual keywords used in the document.

  Example: Monitors—See *Displays*

- Index entries that appear on many different pages should include subordinated entries.

  Example:
      hard drives:
          error checking, 218
          formatting, 166
          replacing, 172

- The first word of each entry has an initial capital letter. Subsequent words should be lowercase. Add a comma between the index entry and the page number.

- Index entries, as well as subordinated entries, should be alphabetized.

- Numeric entries in an index should appear before the A-letter entries and should be ordered numerically with the smallest numbers first.

Figure 2.4 shows a sample index.

Figure 2.4 Sample Index

Indicative Mood

The **indicative mood** is an attitude for writing or speaking and is used in sentences that make a statement, affirm or deny something, or ask a question.

Example: Larry writes in his notebook.

Example: Mary goes to bed.

Indicative mood deals with facts, as well as confirming or denying things.

Example: Is the city still working on a wastewater control plan?

Indirect Objects

An **indirect object** identifies to what or for whom the action of a verb is performed. A **direct object** receives the action in a sentence. There must be a direct object to have an indirect object.

Example: Mike gave <u>Sally</u> [indirect object] the report.

Example: The CEO told <u>us</u> [indirect object] about the layoffs.

Indirect Speech

Indirect speech is commonly used in journalism to report what someone said without including his or her exact words. Indirect speech is often called "reported speech" and includes third-person narration.

The tense of the verbs is usually changed, and the verb *said* is often used.

Example: She said she wanted to visit Europe. [Her exact words were, "I want to visit Europe."]

Inductive Antonomasia

When a specific name or brand name becomes the general term in the language, this phenomenon is called **inductive antonomasia**.

Example: aspirin, Kleenex, Xerox, Google, Band-Aid

Infinitives

An **infinitive** is formed with the root of a verb and the word *to*.

Example: To be, or not to be.

A **present infinitive** describes a present condition.

Example: I like to dream.

The **perfect infinitive** describes a time earlier than that described by the verb.

Example: I would like to have slept until nine.

When combined with auxiliary verb forms, infinitives can also express concepts of time.

■ Simple forms

Example: We had planned to watch the Super Bowl.

Example: Seeing the Cowboys win is always a great thrill.

■ Perfect forms

Example: The Cowboys hoped to have won the Super Bowl.

Example: I was thrilled about their having been in the big game.

■ Passive forms

Example: To be chosen as an NFL player must be the biggest thrill in any football player's life.

Example: Being chosen, however, doesn't mean you get to play.

Infinitive Phrase

An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive—the root verb preceded by *to*—along with modifiers or complements.

Infinitive phrases can act as adjectives, nouns, or adverbs.

■ As an adjective

Example: His plan to eliminate smoking [adjective modifying "plan"] was widely popular.

■   As a noun

Example: <u>To watch him eat</u> [noun subject] ribs is something you have to see.

■   As an adverb

Example: Eric went to college <u>to study to be an engineer</u> [explains why he went].

Inflection

Inflection involves changing the form of a word by adding an affix. Usually this is done to change the number of items or to change the tense. Adding an *s* or an *ed* to a word is a common example of inflection.

Example: cat, cats; talk, talked

Inherent and Noninherent Adjectives

Adjectives that relate a certain attribute or the quality of a noun are known as **inherent adjectives**.

Noninherent adjectives do not relate any particular attribute or quality about the noun they modify.

The same word can be used as either an inherent or noninherent adjective depending on the context of a sentence.

Example: He looked out at the <u>distant</u> [inherent] hills.

Example: He didn't know much about his <u>distant</u> [noninherent] relatives.

Initialisms, Acronyms

See *Acronyms*.

Innuendo

Innuendo is a figure of speech that involves a remark about someone or something that suggests something bad or inappropriate.

When the implied content is sexual in nature, it is called **sexual innuendo**.

In Order to

In expressions with *in order* + infinitive, the *in order* can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the sentence.

Example: We will go to the library in order to get a book.

Example: We will go to the library to get a book.

In order to means the same as *so that*.

Example: We will go the library so that Susan can get a book.

No commas are used to punctuate *so that*.

Inquire, Enquire

See *Enquire, Inquire*.

In-Sentence Lists

See *Lists*.

Inside of, Within

Don't use *inside of* where you could use *within*.

Incorrect: He will visit us inside of a week.

Correct: He will visit us within a week.

Insure, Ensure, Assure

See *Ensure, Assure, Insure*.

Intensive Pronouns

Intensive pronouns (*myself, yourself, herself, ourselves,* and *themselves*) consist of a personal pronoun plus the suffix *self* or *selves*. Intensive pronouns are used to emphasize a noun.

Example: I myself didn't play baseball.

Interjections

Interjections are words or phrases used to communicate excitement, orders, or protests. Sometimes interjections can be used by themselves, but often they are contained in more complex sentence structures.

Example: Oh, I didn't realize you were here.

Example: No, you shouldn't have done that.

Most interjections are treated as parenthetical elements and are set apart from the rest of the sentence by commas or a set of commas. If the interjection is very forceful, it is followed with an exclamation point.

Example: Wow, I can't believe it!

Internet, Intranet, Extranet

The **Internet**, also known as the World Wide Web, consists of a network of computers that are accessible using an Internet protocol (IP) address. *Internet* is capitalized.

An **intranet** is a network within an organization or company. *Intranet* is not capitalized unless it starts a sentence.

An **extranet** is a part of an organization's intranet that is available to authorized outsiders. *Extranet* is not capitalized unless it starts a sentence.

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns (*what, who, which*) are used to introduce questions.

Example: What is that?

Example: Who is coming?

Example: Which dog do you like best?

Which is used for specific reference rather than *what*.

Example: Which dogs do you like best? [refers to individual dogs]

Example: What dogs do you like best? [refers to general dog breeds]

Interrogative pronouns can also act as determiners. In this role, the pronouns are called **interrogative adjectives**.

Example: It doesn't matter which road you take.

Interrogative pronouns are used to introduce noun clauses.

Example: what I thought about it

Like relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns play a subject role in the clause they introduce.

Example: I already said what I thought.

Interrogative Sentences

An **interrogative sentence** is used when asking a question.

Example: Is that your dog?

Questions that can be answered with yes or no are called **yes/no interrogatives**.

Alternative interrogatives are questions that offer the possibility of two or more responses.

Example: Should I use the post office or email to contact you?

Questions that begin with a *wh-* word are called **wh interrogatives**.

Example: Who made those cookies?

Example: Where did you go?

Intranet

See *Internet, Intranet, Extranet*.

Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs do not require objects. Intransitive verbs usually have just a subject plus the verb and an optional adverb.

Example: She complains too much.

Introductory Modifier

See *Prepositional Phrase*.

Invite

Don't confuse *invite* (a verb) with *invitation* (a noun).

Incorrect: I have an invite to the party.

Correct: I have an invitation to the party.

Irony

Irony is a literary technique where the speaker or writer says one thing, but the meaning is something completely different. Irony is often humorous in nature. When a statement uses irony, it is said to be *ironic*. Irony can also imply tragedy or a twist of fate.

Example: "It is a fitting irony that under Richard Nixon, launder became a dirty word."—William Zinsser

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Irregular Plurals

Irregular plurals are words that change form and spelling to specify more than one.

Example: child, children; woman, women; man, men; mouse, mice; person, people

---

Irregular Spelling

Common **irregular spellings** to watch closely are:

- acknowledgment
- awful
- judgment
- ninth
- truly
- wholly

Words ending in *-ceed, -cede,* and *-sede* may sound the same, but pay attention to their spelling. Here are examples:

- exceed
- intercede
- precede
- proceed

- recede
- secede
- succeed
- supersede

The only English word that ends in *-sede* is *supersede*. The only English words that end in *-ceed* are *exceed, proceed,* and *succeed*.

Watch for *-ant* and *-ent* endings:

- correspondent
- eminent

- relevant

Watch for *-ance* and *-ence* endings:

- occurrence

- perseverance

Watch for *-able* and *-ible* endings:

- accessible
- affordable
- comfortable

- compatible
- deductible

Don't omit the silent letters:

- abscess
- acquisition
- diaphragm

- hemorrhage
- silhouette

Don't be confused over double consonants:

- accommodate
- commitment

- necessary
- occurrence

Some words are not spelled the way they are pronounced:

- asterisk
- auxiliary
- boundary
- prerogative
- separate

Irregular Verbs

Most verbs form the simple past and past participle by adding *-ed* to the base verb.

Example: He walked. He has walked.

Some **irregular verbs** do not follow this pattern. Common verbs such as *to be* and *to have* have irregular forms.

Example: He is. They are. He has. They had.

Isocolon

Isocolon is a figure of speech that uses parallelism involving words or phrases that are the same length.

Example: No ifs, ands, or buts.

Example: "They have suffered severely, but they have fought well."
—Winston Churchill

Example: "I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse."—Charles V

Italics

Italics are sometimes used for emphasis.

Example: Notice where you are, not where you *have been*.

Italics are used for the names of books, pamphlets, and periodicals:

Example: *Saturday Evening Post, Black Beauty, Washington Daily News*

The names of ships are italicized but not the abbreviations preceding them:

Example: *Sea Witch,* USS *Heinz*

Its, It's

Its (without an apostrophe) is a possessive pronoun.

Correct: The ship was flying its flag at half-mast.

It's (with an apostrophe) is a contraction meaning "it is."

Correct: It's [It is] getting dark.

J

Jargon

People who work together or who share a common career or interest often develop their own specialized words and expressions, which outsiders may not understand. This unique language is often called **jargon**.

Many times, jargon is created from abbreviations and acronyms. Jargon often serves as shorthand for more complex terminology.

Jargon should not be used in business communications if:

- The readers are not part of the group that uses the specialized language.

- A more familiar term can be used.

- Abbreviations or acronyms are not defined.

Job Titles

When writing about **job titles**, do not capitalize the job title unless referring to a specific person and his or her job title.

Example: president, vice president, general manager

Example: President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, General Manager Phil Jackson

Joint Possessives

A **joint possessive** is a structure that involves expressing ownership of objects that are owned by two or more people.

When the same object is owned by two people, add an apostrophe only after the last name.

Example: That's David and Cathy's house.

If referring to objects that each person owns individually, add an apostrophe after each name.

Example: Those are David's and Cathy's motorcycles.

When one of the people is referred to by a pronoun, add the apostrophe only after the person who is named.

Example: Those are David's and her children.

Jr., Sr.

Junior and *senior* are abbreviated as *Jr.* and *Sr.* Both abbreviations capitalize only the first letter and add a period after the *r.*

Do not use a comma to separate *Jr.* or *Sr.* from the last name.

Example: Bob Stephens Jr.

When writing about a couple, *Jr.* or *Sr.* goes after both names.

Example: Gloria and John Jefferson Jr.

When only using the last name, avoid using the *Jr.* or *Sr.*

Example: Mr. Stephens

K

Kenning

A **kenning** is a synonym made from several words that can be used in place of a single word. Kennings are often used in poetic language. Kennings are used to add color and emphasis to a passage.

Example: wave's steed, a ship

Keyboard Terminology

The following is a list of keyboard keys that may be used in computer-related documentation:

- ALT
- Break
- Clear
- Delete
- End
- ESC (escape)
- Home
- Left Arrow
- Page Down
- Pause
- Reset
- Scroll Lock
- Shift
- Tab
- Windows Logo Key
- Backspace
- Caps Lock
- CTRL (control)
- Down Arrow
- Enter
- F1 through F12
- Insert
- Num Lock (number lock)
- Page Up
- Print Screen
- Right Arrow
- Select
- Spacebar
- Up Arrow

When writing documentation that instructs a user to type a particular key, use lowercase bold to highlight the key.

Example: Type **y** in the field, then click OK.

The first time a key is mentioned, use *the* and *key* with the key name.

Example: Press the Enter key.

For subsequent mentions of the same key, omit *the* and *key.*

Example: Press Enter.

Keys that are typed simultaneously are called keyboard combinations. Keyboard combinations are indicated by adding a plus sign.

Example: CTRL + Shift

When writing about keyboard combinations, don't use the word *key.*

Incorrect: Press CTRL + ALT + Delete keys

Correct: Press CTRL + ALT + Delete

Certain keyboard key names need to be spelled out when writing commands, because the key names are difficult to see or may be confusing. Spell *plus sign, minus sign, hyphen, period,* and *comma* when any of these keys are pressed as part of a command.

Kilobyte

A *kilobyte* is 1,024 bytes. *Kilobyte* is abbreviated as *KB*.

When used as an adjective, add a hyphen between the number and the abbreviation.

Example: That's an 800-KB data record.

When used in measurement, add a space after the number and add *of* to create a prepositional phrase.

Example: The data required 800 KB of storage.

Kilohertz

Kilohertz is a measurement of frequency that is equal to 1,000 cycles per second. The abbreviation for kilohertz is *kHz*.

Unless used as an adjective, leave a space between the number and the abbreviation. Spell *kilohertz* the first time it is mentioned and include the abbreviation in parentheses.

Example: The chip's memory is rated at 500 kilohertz (kHz).

When used as an adjective preceding a noun, use a hyphen between the number and the abbreviation.

Example: That's a 500-kHz processor.

Kind, Kinds

Kind is singular; *kinds* is plural.

Incorrect: She asked for those kind of flowers.

Correct: She asked for those kinds of flowers.

Correct: She asked for that kind of flower.

Kind of, Sort of

Kind of and *sort of* are unclear. Be definite when speaking or writing.

Incorrect: He appeared to be kind of ill.

Correct: He appeared to be rather ill.

Incorrect: She was sort of ill at ease.

Correct: She was somewhat ill at ease.

L

Latino, Hispanic, Chicano

See *Chicano, Latino, Hispanic*.

Latin Terms

See *Abbreviations*.

Latitude, Longitude

Latitude lines run horizontally around the earth (and on maps). To correctly write latitude measurements, consider these facts:

■ Each degree of latitude is approximately 69 miles apart.

■ Latitude degrees are numbered from 0° to 90°.

■ 0° latitude is the equator.

■ Latitudes north of the equator include "north" ("N") in their description.

■ Latitudes south of the equator include "south" ("S") in their description.

■ 90° north is the North Pole, and 90° south is the South Pole.

Longitude lines run vertically around the earth and converge at the North and South Poles. Longitude lines are also known as **meridians**. To correctly write longitude measurements, consider these facts:

■ Each degree of longitude is approximately 69 miles apart at their widest distance, which is as they cross the equator.

■ The meridian at 0° longitude runs through Greenwich, England.

■ Longitudes extend east and west from Greenwich, England, and include "east" ("E") or "west" ("W") in their description.

■ Longitude lines extend to 180° east and 180° west at the International Date Line in the Pacific Ocean.

Longitude and latitude are used together to locate points on the earth. Degrees of longitude and latitude are divided into minutes (′) and seconds (″). Seconds can be further divided into tenths, hundredths, and thousandths.

To describe a location using longitude and latitude, latitude is listed first and is separated from longitude by a comma.

Example: The location of the United States Capitol is 38° 53′23″N, 77° 00′27″W. This translates into 38 degrees, 53 minutes, 23 seconds north of the equator and 77 degrees, 0 minutes, and 27 seconds west of the meridian passing through Greenwich, England.

Lay, Lie

Many people confuse the two words because the word *lay* is both the present tense of *lay* (*lay, lay, laid*) and the past tense of *lie* (*lie, lay, lain*).

Lie means to remain in position or to rest. *Lie* is intransitive, meaning that no object ever accompanies it. When the subject is lying down, use *lie*.

Example: I'm pretty tired, so I'm going to lie down.

Lay means to place something somewhere. *Lay* is transitive, meaning that an object always accompanies it. The verb *lay* takes an object in a sentence, whereas the verb *lie* does not. When the subject acts on something else, use *lay.*

Correct: I'm going to lay the book on your desk.

Incorrect: He lays down after lunch every day.

Correct: He lies down after lunch every day.

Correct: Yesterday he lay on the couch for two hours.

Correct: Will you please lay the book on the table?

Correct: The pen lay on the desk all day.

What can be confusing is that the past tense of *lie* is *lay.* Table 2.19 lists the various forms of the verbs *lay* and *lie*.

Table 2.19 Forms of Lay and Lie and Sample Sentences

	Lay	
	First Person	**Third Person**
Present	I lay the book down.	He lays the book down.
Past	I laid the book down.	He laid the book down.
Perfect form	I have laid the book down.	He has laid the book down.
Participle form	I am laying it down.	He is laying it down.
	Lie	
	First Person	**Third Person**
Present	I lie on my cot.	He lies on his cot.
Past	I lay in my cot.	He lay in his cot.
Perfect form	I have lain in my cot.	He has lain in his cot.
Participle form	I am lying in my cot.	He is lying in his cot.

Lay Out, Layout

Lay out as two words is a verb that means to display something in an order-ly way, to spend or invest money, or to explain or show.

Example: I'm going to lay out my clothes before I start packing them into my suitcase.

Example: I've had to lay out thousands for car repairs.

Example: She laid out all the alternatives available to the company.

Layout, as one word, is a noun that describes a design plan.

Example: She was impressed by the layout of the loft apartment.

Lead, Led

Lead can be both a noun and a verb.

- As a noun, *lead* is a heavy metal.

- As a verb, *lead* means to guide others, and the past tense is *led*.

Learn, Teach

Before you can *learn,* someone must *teach* you.

Incorrect: She learned me how to type.

Correct: She taught me how to type.

Correct: If I teach him correctly, he will learn quickly.

Leave, Let

See *Let, Leave.*

Led, Lead

See *Lead, Led.*

Lend, Loan

See *Loan, Lend.*

Lessen, Lesson

Lessen is a verb that means to make something smaller.

Example: When the rain stopped, the flooding lessened.

Lesson is a noun for something that is learned, studied, or taught.

Example: Falling off the ladder taught me a valuable lesson about safety.

Less, Fewer

When you are talking about countable things, you should use the word *fewer*.

When you are talking about measurable quantities that cannot be counted, you should use the word *less*.

Example: He has fewer assets, but less worry.

Less refers to a smaller amount, degree, or value.

Example: There is less traffic today than yesterday.

Fewer refers to a quantifiable number.

Example: Fewer cars are on the road today than yesterday.

Let, Leave

Let means to permit.

Example: Let her go with us.

Leave means to depart, to bequeath, to allow.

Example: Leave her alone.

Lets, Let's

Lets without an apostrophe means to allow something.

Example: We can go get ice cream if my brother lets us use his car.

Let's with an apostrophe is abbreviated to mean let us.

Example: Let's go get ice cream.

Lexical Density

The **Lexical Density Test** is a readability test that is designed to measure how easy or difficult a document is to read. The test uses the following formula:

$$\text{Lexical Density} = \frac{\text{Number of different words}}{\text{Total number of words}} \times 100$$

A document with a low Lexical Density rating is relatively easy to read. A rating of 60–70% is difficult to read. A rating of 40–50% is the target range for business documents.

Liable, Likely

Liable should be used when referring to legal responsibility.

Example: The landlord is liable for damages.

Likely refers to a high probability.

Example: That horse is likely to win the race.

Lie, Lay

See *Lay, Lie*.

Lighted, Lit

Lighted and *lit* can both be used as the past tense and past participle of the verb *to light*. Both *lighted* and *lit* can also be used as adjectives. *Lit* is more often used as a verb, whereas *lighted* is more often used as an adjective.

Correct: He lit a candle.

Correct: He held a lighted pipe in his hand.

Like, As

Like is a preposition always followed by a noun or pronoun in the objective case.

Correct: Though he was only a little boy, he marched like a major.

As is an adverbial conjunction used to introduce a subordinate clause.

Incorrect: It appears like he isn't coming.

Correct: It appears as <u>if he isn't coming</u> [the subordinate clause].

Line

Line should not be used in place of *business*.

Incorrect: He has a jewelry line.

Correct: He is in the jewelry business.

Linking Verbs

Linking verbs connect a subject and its complement (a noun or adjective that describes the subject). Linking verbs often include forms of the verb *to be*.

Example: These employees <u>are</u> [linking verb] all hourly workers.

Sometimes linking verbs are related to the five senses.

Example: look, sound, smell, feel, taste

Example: Those offices look vacant.

Sometimes they are related to a state of being.

Example: appear, seem, become, grow, turn, prove, remain

Example: Increased sales seem likely.

Lists

Lists can be used to highlight specific information or to make it easier to reference information. When creating lists, consider the following tips:

- List items should have parallel phrasing.

- Use a lead-in sentence to introduce the list.

- Each list item should be grammatically correct if it continues from the lead-in to form a sentence.

- Do not use headings instead of a lead-in sentence.

In-Sentence Lists

In-sentence lists are built into the flow of the text.

Example: There are three things on our agenda: (1) minutes from last month's meeting, (2) treasurer's report, and (3) new business.

Example: Remember three things about firearms: (1) they can be used for sport; (2) they can be used destructively; and (3) they do not care how you use them.

Note the characteristics of the preceding in-sentence lists:

■ Use a colon to introduce the items only if the lead-in is a complete sentence.

■ Punctuate list items with commas for sentence fragments.

■ Use semicolons to separate the list items that are complete sentences.

■ Add an *and* before the last item.

■ Use numbers or letters within parentheses for each item.

■ Avoid using in-sentence lists when there are more than four or five items.

Vertical Lists

Vertical lists are indented and lined up one over the other. Consider the following tips when creating vertical lists:

■ List items should be indented three to five spaces from the lead-in sentence.

■ Sentence-style capitalization should be used on each list item.

■ Optionally add a comma after each item.

■ If you add commas, add a period after the last item.

■ If complete sentences are used for each item, semicolons may be used after each item.

Numbered Lists

In **numbered lists**, each item has a number. Consider the following tips when creating numbered lists:

■ Use numbered lists when a specific order is required for the items in the list.

■ For nested sublists, use letters for each item.

Example:
1. Two items need to be addressed first:
    a. When to hold the meeting
    b. Where to hold the meeting

Bulleted Lists

Bulleted lists are vertical lists where bullets or other symbols are used to introduce each item.

Multicolumn Lists

Multicolumn lists consist of items appearing in two or more columns. Column headings are not necessarily used in multicolumn lists.

Literally, Figuratively

Often the word *literally* is used when *figuratively* should be used.

Incorrect: Literally, it's a jungle in that office.

Correct: Figuratively, it's a jungle in that office.

It is best to omit both *literally* and *figuratively* from your business documents.

Lit, Lighted

See *Lighted, Lit*.

Litotes

A **litotes** is a figure of speech where a writer or speaker uses a negative word to express the opposite of what he or she means. Litotes are an understatement of reality.

Example: She's not the sharpest student in the class.

Little, A Little

Little means the same as *few* or *not much*.

Example: Mike has little experience with the software.

A little means the same as *some*.

Example: Sara has a little experience working with the software when she was with her previous employer.

Loan, Lend

Loan should be used as a noun to refer to an agreement to borrow.

Example: He went to the bank to receive a loan.

To allow someone to borrow is *to lend*.

Incorrect: Loan me your pen.

Correct: Lend me your pen.

Log On, Log Off, Logon, Logoff

When *log on* or *log off* are two words, they are treated as verbs.

Use the term *log on* when referring to the action of users when entering their ID and password to access a network or a secure Web site.

Example: You have to log on to gain access to the database.

Use the term *log off* when referring to the action of users when ending a session on a network or secure Web site.

Example: Make sure you log off before closing your browser.

When *logon* or *logoff* are one word, they are treated as adjectives.

Example: The Web site features a secure logon.

Example: The site has an automatic logoff if there's no activity for ten minutes.

Lonely, Alone

See *Alone, Lonely.*

Longitude, Latitude

See *Latitude, Longitude.*

Loose, Lose

Loose is a verb that means to allow to run free and an adjective that means not tight. *Loose* is pronounced with an *s* sound.

Example: My neighbors <u>loosed</u> [verb] their dogs in the neighborhood.

Example: He wore a <u>loose</u> [adjective] kerchief around his neck.

Lose is a verb that means to separate from possession or to suffer a loss from the removal of something. *Lose* is pronounced with a *z* sound.

Example: She tends to lose patience with her elderly parents.

Lost, Lost Out

Don't use extra words—like *out*—that are not necessary for meaning.

Incorrect: He lost out.

Correct: He lost.

Lots

Don't use *lots* when referring to an amount of something. *Lots* and *lots of* are colloquialisms that should be avoided. Alternatives include *many* and *much*.

Incorrect: She receives lots of fan mail.

Correct: She receives a great deal of fan mail.

Incorrect: He spent lots of money on that car.

Correct: He spent much money on that car.

Incorrect: She has lots of friends.

Correct: She has many friends.

M

Mad, Angry

Use *angry* rather than *mad*. Remember, dogs go mad, people get angry.

Incorrect: Chaital was mad at Ravi.

Correct: Chaital was angry with Ravi.

Margin Notes

Margin notes are often used in documents to provide tips and warnings. Tips can provide hints, shortcuts, or background information.

Margin notes can include a bolded heading that describes the subject of the note. Margin notes can also provide cross-references to direct readers to additional information elsewhere in the document.

Margin notes should be limited to three or four lines of text. Break the lines of margin notes so that they are all approximately the same width.

Mass Nouns

Mass nouns describe things that have no boundaries, such as liquids, powders, and substances.

Example: water, milk, juice, salt, sugar, sand, metal, wood

Mass nouns are also known as **uncountable nouns** or **noncount nouns**.

Mass nouns cannot be modified by a numeral without specifying a unit of measure.

Example: I had one quart of milk this morning.

Mass nouns can be combined with an indefinite article (*a* or *an*).

Example: Mercury is a metal.

Mathematical Equations

See *Equations*.

Maybe, May Be

Maybe is an adverb that means *perhaps*.

Example: Maybe she forgot to call me when she arrived.

May be is a verb and an auxiliary that suggests a possibility of something occurring.

Example: He may be on the football team next year.

May, Can

May refers to permission. *Can* refers to ability.

Incorrect: Can I help you?

Correct: May I help you?

Correct: Can he drive a car?

May, Might

Use *may* when seeking or granting permission for something or when suggesting something is possible. Use *might* to suggest a small possibility for something.

Example: May I help you with something?

Example: It may snow.

Example: I might attend the party.

May and *might* are interchangeable when expressing the possibility of something happening. *Might* is more tentative than *may*.

Example: She may be my new neighbor.

Example: She might be my new neighbor.

Mean, Median, Average

See A*verage, Mean, Median.*

Megabyte

A *megabyte* is 1,048,576 bytes or 1,024 kilobytes.

Megabyte is abbreviated as *MB*. Leave a space between a numeral and the abbreviation.

Example: I'll need at least 3 MB of storage for the files.

When used as an adjective preceding a noun, use a hyphen between the numeral and the abbreviation.

Example: I attached a 3-MB file to the email message.

Megahertz

Megahertz is a measurement for frequency that is equal to one million cycles per second.

The abbreviation for megahertz is *MHz*. Leave a space between a numeral and the abbreviation.

Example: The graphics processor accesses memory at 70 MHz.

When used as an adjective preceding a noun, use a hyphen between the numeral and the abbreviation.

Example: The computer had a 500-MHz graphics processor.

Meiosis

Meiosis is a figure of speech that is used to understate something or to imply that it is less significant or smaller than it really is.

Example: Bringing the gun to school was just a harmless prank.

Me, Myself, I

See *I, Me, Myself.*

Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech where the speaker or writer equates one word to another in some way. Metaphors do not use *like* or *as* in the comparison.

Example: Mike was an angel in the eyes of his mother.

Example: Leslie is such a stubborn mule.

Metaphors are often used in literature and poetry. A **mixed metaphor** occurs when the comparison of the two subjects is nonsensical.

Example: The linebacker was a tank, a thunderstorm crashing through the offensive line.

Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech where something is called not by its own name, but by the name of something with which it is associated.

Example: The <u>White House</u> [instead of the president] is trying hard to explain the new policies.

Mfr., Mfg.

The abbreviation for *manufacturer* is *mfr*. The abbreviation for *manufacturing* is *mfg*.

Might Could

Might could is a colloquialism that should be avoided. The combination is redundant.

Might can be used alone when there is a possibility of something occurring. *Could* can be used alone when someone is able to do something.

Might, May

See *May, Might*.

Might of, Should of, Would of, Could of

This construction is the result of poor pronunciation. The correct phrases are *might have*, *should have*, *would have*, and *could have*.

Incorrect: If you could of arranged it, I would of gone.

Correct: If you could have arranged it, I would have gone.

Minimal Pairs

Two words that are very similar when pronounced but have different meanings are called **minimal pairs**.

Example: thick, sick; teeth, tea; that, sat; wonder, thunder

Misplaced Modifiers

When a modifier such as *only, just, nearly,* or *barely* appears in the wrong place in a sentence, it is called a **misplaced modifier**.

Incorrect: He nearly kicked the football fifty yards.

Correct: He kicked the football nearly fifty yards.

The best rule is to place the modifier immediately before the word it modifies.

Mixed Conditionals

A **mixed conditional** is a conditional sentence that uses an if clause and whose clauses refer to different periods of time.

Example: If I had studied [past] in school, I would be [present] rich now.

Example: If she had gone [past] on the interview, we would be [present] working in the same office.

Example: If I were [present] smarter, I would have [past] invested in Apple Computer back in the early 1980s.

Example: If she didn't work [present] so many hours, she would have [future] more time with her family.

Example: If I am going [future] to get that promotion, I would not have [past] sent out so many résumés trying to find another job.

Example: If I were [future] working for that company when it goes public, I would be [present] very rich.

Mixed Metaphor

See *Metaphor.*

Mnemonics

Mnemonics are memory devices that help you remember something. Mnemonics are often used to remember how to spell certain words.

Example: *i* before *e* except after *c*

Example: Scream *e-e-e* when walking past the cemetery.

Example: I lost an *e* in an argument.

Example: A desert is *s*andy, while a dessert is *s*uper *s*weet.

Modifiers

Modifiers are words that limit certain aspects of a sentence.

Some modifiers—such as *only, just, nearly,* and *barely*—can easily end up in the wrong place in a sentence.

Incorrect: He only threw the ball ten feet.

Correct: He threw the ball only ten feet.

The best rule is to place the modifier immediately before the word it modifies. When a modifier improperly modifies something, it is called a **dangling modifier**. See *Dangling Modifiers.*

Incorrect: Cleaning the windows every six months, the building seemed to look better. [Buildings can't clean their own windows.]

Correct: Cleaning the windows every six months, the maintenance staff made the building look better.

Adverbs can be placed almost anywhere in a sentence, but their placement can sometimes obscure their meaning.

Unclear: The people who listen to public radio <u>often</u> [adverb] like classical music. [Does everyone who listens to public radio, even for a few minutes, like classical music?]

Clear: The people who often listen to public radio like classical music.

You can add variety to your sentences by the way you place modifiers. You can use:

■ Initial modifiers.

■ Midsentence modifiers.

■ Terminal modifiers.

■ Combining modifiers.

Initial Modifiers

Consider these ideas for using initial modifiers:

■ Dependent clause

Example: Although he was tired, Bob wrote the report.

■ Infinitive phrase

Example: To please his boss, Bob wrote the report.

■ Adverb

Example: Slowly and laboriously, Bob wrote the report.

■ Participial phrase

Example: Hoping to be promoted, Bob wrote the report.

Midsentence Modifiers

Consider these ideas for using midsentence modifiers:

■ Appositive

Example: Bob, an expert on regulations, wrote the report.

■ Participial phrase

Example: Bob, hoping to catch up on his work, stayed after hours.

Terminal Modifiers

Consider these ideas for using terminal modifiers:

■ Present participial phrase

Example: Bob worked on the report, hoping to please his boss.

■ Past participial phrase/adjectival phrase

Example: Bob worked on the report demanded by his boss.

Combining Modifiers

Consider the following idea for combining modifiers:

Example: Slowly and laboriously, Bob, an expert on regulations, worked on the report, hoping to please his boss.

Misplaced Modifiers

See *Misplaced Modifiers*.

Monitor

See *Display, Monitor, Screen.*

Monosyllabic

Monosyllabic words have only one syllable.

Example: her, his, its, just, not, both, since

Mood

Mood refers to the attitude of the writer. Mood helps discern between facts and the hypothetical. Hypothetical statements use *could, would,* or *might.*

Three attitudes can accompany a verb:

■ **Indicative mood**—used to make a statement or ask a question

■ **Imperative mood**—used to give directions, to give orders, or to make a strong suggestion (these verbs don't need a subject, which is understood to be "you")

Example: Get out of my office.

Example: Answer the phone.

■ **Subjunctive mood**—used with dependent clauses to express a wish

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Example: He wishes she were fired.

This mood may be used with *if* and a condition:

Example: We could have won the contract if we'd bid lower.

The sentence may begin with *that* to express a demand.

Example: That would be in your best interest to do.

More Than, Over

More than and *over* can be used interchangeably to indicate an excess.

Example: The thief took more than ten thousand dollars in the robbery.

Note: Some writers disapprove of using *more than* before a number.

Over is normally used when referring to age, time, distance, or height.

Example: We rode together for over 50 miles without saying a word.

Morpheme

The smallest unit of meaning in the English language is a **morpheme**. A word can have more than one morpheme.

Example: *Unhappy* has two morphemes: the prefix *un-,* meaning not, and *happy*.

Example: The word *steel* consists of only one morpheme.

Most of All, Almost

Most of all is a colloquial expression. Use *most of* or *almost* instead.

Incorrect: We walked most of all the way.

Correct: We walked most of the way.

Correct: We walked almost all the way.

Motor, Engine

See *Engine, Motor.*

Mouse Terminology

When writing about the use of a computer mouse in procedures and instructions, follow these guidelines:

■ Use *pointer* or *mouse pointer* rather than *cursor.*

■ Do not use the plural of *mouse* (mice).

■ Use *mouse button* for the left mouse button.

■ Use *right mouse button* for accessing secondary menus.

■ Use *right-click* to mean clicking the right mouse button.

■ Hyphenate *double-click* and *right-click.*

■ Use *click,* not *click on.*

■ Use *drag* rather than *click and drag.*

■ Do not combine keyboard and mouse actions in the same sentence.

Multicolumn Lists

See *Lists.*

Myself, Me

See *I, Me, Myself.*

N

Names

See *Proper Nouns*.

Negative Adverbs

A **negative adverb** is used to create a negative meaning without using words like *no, not, neither, nor,* or *never.*

Negative adverbs include *barely, hardly, little, nowhere, rarely, scarcely,* and *seldom.*

Example: He seldom reads anymore.

Example: He hardly talks since the stroke.

Negative Formations

Just as not all plurals are made by adding *s* to a word, not all negatives are made by adding *un-* as a prefix.

There are many other ways to create negatives. Table 2.20 presents a list of common negative formation techniques.

Table 2.20 Common Negative Formation Techniques and Examples

	Meaning	**Examples**
a- or *an-* often used before words beginning with a vowel or *h*	lacking, without	amoral
		asexual
anti-	the opposite of	antibiotic
		antichrist
		antifreeze
		antimatter
counter-	the opposite of or contary to	counterclockwise
		counterculture
de-	the reverse of	decompose
		de-emphasize
		deforestation
		demagnetize
dis-	the reverse of	disarm
		discontented
		disrespectful
dys-	abnormal or impaired	dysfunctional
		dyspeptic
-free	without	caffeine-free
		crime-free
		sugar-free
-less	without	helpless
		motionless
		shoeless

(continues)

Table 2.20 *(continued)*

	Meaning	Examples
mal-	bad or incorrect	malformed
		malfunctioning
mis-	bad or incorrect	misfortune
		misinterpret
		misuse
non-	reverse of meaning	nonexistent
		nonfattening
		nonintoxicating
un-, in-, il-, im-, ir-	reverse of meaning	undressed
		undrinkable
		incapable
		illegitimate
		imbalance
		implausible
		irrefutable
		irrevocable

Negative Pronouns

Negative pronouns are used in negative noun phrases: *no one, nobody, neither, none,* and *nothing*.

Neither, Either

See *Either, Neither.*

Neologism

Neologism is a process where new words come into the English language from various sources, such as mass media, technology, other languages, and even slang.

Example: CD, PC, Internet, superhighway, shareware, going postal

Never

Never means never; it does not refer to a limited period of time.

Incorrect: We never saw your dog since yesterday.

Correct: We have not seen your dog since yesterday.

Correct: We never saw your dog. What breed was he?

Nominal Adjectives

Nominal adjectives act as both nouns and adjectives, and they are used to denote a class of people or things. They are preceded by a determiner (*the*) and can be modified by adjectives.

Example: the poor, the hungry, the sick, the blind

Nominal adjectives are also words that describe concepts.

Example: the opposite, the contrary, the good

Nominal adjectives reference certain nationalities.

Example: the French, the British, the Japanese

Comparative and superlative forms can be nominal adjectives.

Example: the greatest of these, the elder of the two

Nominative Absolutes

Nominative absolutes are a phrase consisting of a noun or pronoun, a participle, and any related modifiers. Nominative absolutes are also called **absolute phrases**.

Absolute phrases modify an entire sentence. They often appear as parenthetical elements that are set apart from the rest of the sentence by a pair of commas or by a dash or a pair of dashes.

Example: <u>The workday nearly finished</u> [nominative absolute], the programmers slowly began shutting down their PCs for the day.

Example: The authors signed autographs through the lunch hour, <u>their pens scribbling madly.</u>

Example: <u>Having been top performers for their entire careers,</u> the sales team was not surprised by the honors they received.

Noun phrases can also exist as absolute phrases.

Example: Then there was my college friend Mike—<u>the party animal</u> [noun phrase]—now a respected member of the legal profession.

Nominative Case

See *Case*.

Nominative Possessive

Nominative possessives are pronouns like *mine, yours, ours,* and *theirs.*

Example: Mine is a better dog than yours.

Noncount Nouns

See *Mass Nouns*.

Nondefining Relative Clause

A **nondefining relative clause** provides additional information about a noun or noun phrase. Nondefining relative clauses are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

Example: My psychologist brother, <u>who lives in Nashville</u> [nondefining relative clause], is coming into town for the holidays.

Who and *whose* are used to refer to people.

Which and *whose* are used to refer to things.

That can't be used in a nondefining relative clause.

Nonfinite Verbs

Unlike finite verbs, **nonfinite verbs** have no tense, person, or singular and plural forms. Nonfinite verbs are called *verbals*.

There are three types of verbals:

■ **Infinitives** are the *to* form of the verb.

Example: to walk, to talk, to see, to jump

■ **Participles** act as adjectives or as the main verbs in a verb phrase.

Example: He put on a pair of <u>running</u> [participle acting as an adjective] shoes.

Example: He knew he would <u>have to run</u> [verb phrase] to catch the bus. [verb phrase]

■ **Gerunds** are the *-ing* form of the verb and are used as nouns.

Example: <u>Walking</u> [gerund serving as a noun] is great for your health.

A clause needs a finite verb to serve as a predicate; therefore, nonfinite verbs can't serve as predicates.

Noninherent Adjectives

See *Inherent and Noninherent Adjectives*.

Nonrestrictive Clauses

Nonrestrictive clauses do not provide any essential information to a sentence and can be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence. They are often set apart from the rest of the sentence by a comma or pair of commas (if in the middle of the sentence).

Example: Doctor Early, <u>who lives in the same neighborhood as my friends Bill and Kathy</u> [nonrestrictive clause], is my mother's doctor.

Notices

Special **notices** highlight information that readers need to understand key points, avoid injuries or death, or prevent equipment damage when following procedures.

Five main types of notices are used in business writing:

1. Caution—to warn readers about damage to equipment, software, or problems with a particular outcome

2. Danger—to warn readers about possible fatal injuries to themselves or others

3. Note—to emphasize points, to serve as a reminder, or to point out minor problems

4. Warning—to warn readers about possible minor injuries

5. Tip—to help readers apply useful techniques or to point out benefits or capabilities

Consider the following tips when using notices:

■ Place notices within the text where they are needed.

■ Avoid all caps for special notices (except for *DANGER*).

Formatting for a special notice includes:

■ Type the word (*Caution, Danger, Note,* or *Warning*), followed by a colon.

■ Use bold font for the word *Caution, Danger, Note,* or *Warning.*

■ Use your regular text font for the body of the special notice.

■ Skip one space after the colon and begin typing the special notice.

■ Single-space the text within the special notice.

■ Skip one line above and below the special notice.

■ Align the special notice with the text to which it refers.

■ Use a numbered list for multiple special notices.

For special notices involving danger, enhance the formatting to include:

■ *DANGER* in all capital letters.

■ Setting the text of the special notice message in boldface.

■ Drawing a box around the danger message.

Noun Case

Noun case tells you the role of a noun in a sentence:

■ Subject

Example: The basketball player jumped very high.

■ Object

Example: She selected a paintbrush.

■ Possessive (usually requiring an apostrophe and the letter *s* or *es*)

Example: The <u>policeman's</u> uniform was blue.

Noun Clause

A **noun clause** is a group of words that act like a noun in a sentence. A noun clause contains a subject and a verb.

Example: <u>What she said about Alex</u> was misunderstood.

Noun Phrase

A noun with several modifiers can act as a single noun in the form of a **noun phrase**. A phrase is a group of related words that does not include a subject and verb. If a subject and verb are present, the combination is a **clause**. A noun phrase includes a noun and its modifiers.

Example: college football team, extremely long hair, international bond fund, the tall dark man

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The modifiers included in the noun phrase can be any of the following:

■ Adjectives

Example: <u>tall dark</u> man

■ Participial phrase

Example: the bushes <u>bordering the edge of the sidewalk</u>

■ Infinitive phrase

Example: the first woman <u>to fly around the world</u>

■ Modifying clause

Example: the mistakes he had made the day before

■ Prepositional phrase

Example: the trail next to the lake, over by the dam

Usually all the words in a noun phrase are together; however, occasionally they can be broken up into what is called a **discontinuous noun phrase**.

Example: Several burglaries have been reported involving people who were gone for the weekend.

There is nothing wrong with a discontinuous noun phrase. It is sometimes useful for balancing a subject and predicate. Otherwise, the result can be a ten-word subject and a three-word verb.

A common problem to avoid is a long string of compound noun phrases. This often happens when the string also involves a group of compound nouns, such as *student body, book cover,* or *meeting place.* If you put together a long string of these phrases, the sentence can be very difficult to read.

Example: The office supply store's computer section offered printer cartridges, inkjet printers, laser printers, desktop computers, laptop computers, hard drives, interface cards, and network routers.

An addressed person's name or substitute name is called a **vocative**. Vocatives sometimes take the form of a noun phrase. A vocative is treated as a parenthetical element and is set apart from the rest of the sentence by a pair of commas, if it appears in the flow of a sentence. You do not need to add commas every time someone's name is mentioned in a sentence. Commas are used only when the name refers to someone being addressed in the sentence.

Example: Lieutenant, get those men moving.

There are four types of vocatives:

■ Single names, with or without a title

- The personal pronoun *you*

- Appellatives of endearment, such as *darling, my dear, sweetheart,* and *sir*

- Nominal clauses

Example: Whoever is singing, stop it now.

Noun Plurals

Normally, you can form the plural of a noun by adding *s.*

Example: Wilson, Wilsons

When the noun already ends in *s,* add *es.*

Example: file, files; desk, desks; lens, lenses

These rules apply to proper names as well as to common nouns.

Example: Jones, Joneses

Form the plural of a number by adding an *s* without an apostrophe.

Example: the 1990s

Avoid adding (*s*) to words so they can be interpreted as singular or plural.

Incorrect: Please keep your dog(s) on a leash.

Nouns

Nouns name a person, place, or thing. Nouns tell you who or what. There are several different types of nouns:

■ **Proper nouns** name a specific person, place, or thing and are capitalized.

Example: Jim, Alice, Canada

■ **Nouns of address** are words used as someone's name.

Example: Judge, Colonel, Mom

■ **Common nouns** do not name a specific person, place, or thing.

Example: candy, wool, tree

■ **Countable nouns** are used for counting.

Example: ten dollars, two dozen, fifty states

■ **Mass nouns** refer to things that cannot be counted.

Example: air, water

■ **Collective nouns** are used to name groups of people or things.

Example: class, fans, team

■ **Abstract nouns** name intangible things.

Example: hope, love, peace, war

■ **Compound nouns** are composed of groups of words. See *Compound Nouns*.

■ **Gerunds** are formed from a verb by adding *-ing*. See *Gerunds*.

Nouns of Address

See *Nouns*.

Number Abbreviations

See *Abbreviations for Numbers*.

Numbered List

A **numbered list** is an indented vertical list that is numbered. Numbered lists are useful for sequential steps in a procedure. Use these guidelines when creating a numbered list:

- Introduce the list with a lead-in sentence.

- Type the number followed by a period.

- Use sentence-style capitalization.

- Indent additional lines under the text rather than under the number.

- Use regular line spacing for the list.

- Indent the list items three to five spaces.

- Punctuate the list items if they are complete sentences.

- Avoid numbered lists with more than eight to ten items.

- Break long lists into smaller ones if necessary.

- Omit articles (*a, an, the*) from the beginning of list items.

Numbers or Words

Generally, numbers under 10 are spelled out, and numbers 10 and over are shown in figures. The only variation to this rule is when writing about a person's age. Then it is more accepted to write out ages. The more formal the text, the greater is the tendency to express the number in words.

Printed Text and Prose Text

In printed text, a number used for comparison with other numbers in the same section should be in numerical form.

Example: An excavation of 500 feet can be finished as rapidly as 200 feet if the right equipment is used.

At the Beginning of a Sentence

A number appearing at the beginning of a sentence, if it can be expressed in one or two words, should be spelled out.

Correct: Sixteen new cars were delivered.

Correct: Thirty or forty bushels were needed.

Incorrect: 2,746,892 copies were purchased.

Correct: They purchased 2,746,892 copies.

Legal Documents

In legal documents and in papers that transfer land title, numbers are written in both words and figures to prevent misunderstanding.

Example: West thirty (30) feet of Lot Nine (9) in Block Four (4)

Round Numbers

Approximate round numbers are spelled out.

Example: The station is about fifty blocks away.

Example: He found nearly two thousand dollars.

Sets of Numbers

To differentiate two sets of numbers occurring in the same sentence, use words for one and figures for the other.

Example: Three of the men drove 2,000 miles each; four drove 3,000 miles each; and only one drove the complete 5,000 miles.

If the sentence cannot be rewritten, use a comma or dash to separate the numbers.

Example: During the year 1992, 20 million people visited the park.

Example: We received 1,213—113 of which we couldn't use.

Large Numbers

If large numbers can be written in one or two words, do so.

Example: four hundred, five million, two billion

Use the short form for writing numbers over a thousand not pertaining to money.

Example: fourteen hundred [*not* one thousand four hundred]

Large, even amounts may combine figures and words.

Example: production of 37 million paper clips, a budget of $146 billion

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If a number or the word *several* precedes *hundred, thousand, million, billion,* and so on, the singular form is used. After *many,* the plural form and *of* are used.

Example: six hundred pages, several million years, many hundreds of pages

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Separating Digits

All numbers above 999 are written with commas to separate every group of three digits, counting from the units place.

Example: 1,001, 123,000, 1,436,936

Exceptions: Commas are omitted in long decimal fractions, page numbers, addresses, telephone numbers, room numbers, and form numbers.

Example: 0.10356, page 3487, 1467 Wilshire Boulevard, 201-555-9088, Room 2630, Form 2317-A

Commas are also omitted in four-digit year numbers, but they are added for years with five or more digits.

Example: The company began in 1992.

Example: The pottery shards were dated at about 14,000 B.C.

Example: This science fiction novel takes place in the year 27,345 A.D.

Patent numbers are written with commas.

Example: Patent No. 3,436,987

Serial and policy numbers are written without commas.

Example: Motor Number 245889954, Policy Number 894566

O

Object

The **object** is the part of a sentence that receives action.

Example: He threw the ball [direct object].

An **object complement** renames or describes a direct object.

Example: He named his monkey [direct object], Meep [object complement].

An **indirect object** identifies to what or to whom the action of a verb is directed.

Example: He sold me [indirect object] his car [direct object].

The word *me*—along with other pronouns such as *him, us,* and *them*—is not always an indirect object; it can also serve as a direct object.

Example: Save me!

Object Complement

See *Complements*.

Objective Case

See *Subjective Case*.

Off

Off is always used alone and not with *of*.

Incorrect: The ribbon was taken off of the package.

Correct: The ribbon was taken off the package.

Offline

See *Online, Offline*.

On Account of

Avoid this phrase and use *because* instead.

One

One can be a determiner, adjective, or pronoun.

■   Determiner—used before a proper noun to designate a particular person

Example: On September 1, did you make a phone call at 3:00 P.M. to one Horace Wauson?

■   Adjective—used to modify the number of a noun

Example: I'll have just one more piece of chicken.

■   Pronoun—used as numerical expression or to stand in for the speaker or a generic average person

Example: One of the students will volunteer.

Example: If one tries hard enough, one can be anything.

The possessive form of *one* is *one's*.

Example: One must learn from one's mistakes.

In the United States, *one's* is often replaced by *his, her,* or *your.*

Example: One must learn from his mistakes.

The reflexive form of *one* is *oneself.*

Example: If one skips lunch, one will find oneself very hungry
by dinner.

The plural of *one* is *ones*.

Example: Which ones do you want?

One Another, Each Other

See *Each Other, One Another.*

Online, Offline

Online and *offline* are commonly written as one word, unless being used as
an adverbial phrase.

Example: Is the printer online or offline?

Example: Mr. Smith used the computer at the library to go on line.

Only

Be careful of where you place this adverb; its position determines which word it modifies.

Incorrect: I could only get him to play one piece.

Correct: I could get him to play only one piece.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is a term used to describe words that suggest the sound being described.

Example: bang, bash, clang, clap, crackle, fizz, growl, honk, knock, mumble, ouch, plop, rattle, screech, smack, sniff, splash, thud, tinkle, twang, tweet, whizz

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Open

Open should be used without *up*.

Incorrect: We open up the doors promptly at noon.

Correct: We open the doors promptly at noon.

Open Compounds

See *Compound Words*.

Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers describe the order or sequence of something.

Example: first, 2nd, third, fourth, 50th

Ordinal numbers can be written as words or abbreviations.

Example: 1st, first; 2nd, second; 3rd, third

Ordinal numbers usually appear before a noun.

Example: It was my parents' 60th wedding anniversary.

Over, More Than

See *More than, Over.*

Oxford Comma

When listing a series of items in a sentence, a comma is inserted between each item, and a final comma is inserted before the word *and* and the last item. The last comma is called a "serial comma" or **Oxford comma**. Oxford commas are optional but recommended.

Oxymoron

An **oxymoron** is a figure of speech that occurs when two terms that appear to contradict themselves are combined.

Example: minor crisis, alone together, living dead, original copies, pretty ugly, definite maybe, rolling stop

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P

Page Breaks

Page breaks can be manually inserted into a document; however, they should not be added until all illustrations have been added and the document is ready for final delivery. When determining page breaks, consider the following tips:

- The goal is to keep related content together on the same page.

- New paragraphs that start at the bottom of a page should have at least two lines of text; otherwise they should be moved to the next page.

- A bulleted list that starts at the bottom of a page should have the lead-in sentence and at least two items in the list; otherwise it should be moved to the next page.

Avoid page breaks in the following situations:

- In the middle of a note, tip, caution, or warning message

- In the middle of a table

- In long tables (if they must spread over several pages, repeat the table title and heading when pages break from right to left)

- When separating content from any illustrations

Page Numbering

For all **page numbering**, use figures to show the numbers. Commas are not used in page numbers greater than 999.

Page Number Formats

On legal documents, a page number is centered at the bottom of each page; on other papers, it is usually shown at the top.

Manuscripts and briefs are numbered in the upper right corner; papers that are to be bound at the left are numbered in the lower right corner. In each case, all numbers should appear at exactly the same place on all pages in a document.

Title pages are not numbered. A first page of a work or of a chapter is not marked with a number, although the numbering of the following pages takes into consideration the number of the first page.

It is acceptable to use a hyphen before and after the page number (-3-) without a period.

Never use quotation marks around a page number, and never type the word *page* before the number.

Palindromes

Words or phrases that are spelled the same forward or backward are **palindromes**.

Example: madam, mom, level

Paragraphs

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences that focus on a single topic. When writing paragraphs, consider the following tips:

- Keep the paragraph confined to one idea.

- Focus all sentences on the single idea or provide supporting evidence or details regarding it.

- If the single points in a paragraph get too long, break them up into separate paragraphs.

Elements of a Paragraph

A well-written paragraph includes the following elements:

- Unity—The entire paragraph should have a single focus. If it begins with one focus, it should not end with another.

■ Coherence—The paragraph should be easily understandable to the reader.

■ Logical bridges—Carry the same topic from sentence to sentence. Construct successive sentences in a parallel form.

■ Topic sentence—One sentence in the paragraph should indicate the focus of the paragraph. (A topic sentence can be anywhere in the paragraph.)

■ Verbal bridges—Create coherence using verbal bridges.

   ■ Key words can be repeated in several sentences in the paragraph.

   ■ Synonymous words can be repeated in different sentences.

   ■ Pronouns can refer to nouns used in previous sentences.

   ■ Transitional words can be used to link ideas from previous sentences.

Paragraph Development

When writing a paragraph, consider the following tips:

■ Introduce the topic using the topic sentence.

■ Beware of paragraphs that have only two or three sentences.

To develop a paragraph, do the following:

■ Use examples and illustrations.

■ Provide details, statistics, and evidence.

■ Provide quotes and paraphrases from other people.

■ Tell a story.

■ Define terms used in the paragraph.

■ Compare and contrast ideas.

■ Evaluate causes.

■ Examine the effects.

■ Offer a chronological summary.

When to Start a New Paragraph

You should start a new paragraph in the following situations:

- When you begin a new idea

- To contrast, debate, or point out the differences between ideas

- When readers need a pause

- When ending an introduction or starting the conclusion

Paragraph Transitions

Sentences that outline what a document has covered and where the rest of the document is going are called **signposts** or **transitions**. Transitional sentences lead from one idea to the next. They are often used at the end of a paragraph to help one paragraph flow into the next.

Parallel Construction

Parallel construction is a stylistic technique for organizing expressions of similar content to improve readability. This technique involves the removal of repetitive words and combining similar sentences and ideas.

> **Nonparallel example:** John talked with Mike. John talked with Mary. John talked with Leon.
>
> **Parallel example:** John talked with Mike, Mary, and Leon.

Parallel construction also applies to things such as headings and bulleted lists. Headings should be a consistent part of speech or type of clause. List items should begin with the same part of speech or tense.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is your own version of someone else's ideas and information. Paraphrasing allows you to use research and other resources without plagiarizing (as long as sources are cited in the document). Paraphrasing allows you to avoid quoting and gives you control over the writing style of your document.

To effectively paraphrase, do the following:

■ Read and reread the original content until you fully understand it.

■ Take notes.

■ Set aside the original and write your paraphrased version.

■ Compare your version to the original to make sure your version accurately expresses the idea or information.

■ Use quotation marks to identify anything you have quoted verbatim from the original.

■ Include the source in your notes to cite in your final document.

Parentheses

Parentheses are used to enclose matter that is introduced by way of explanation.

Example: If the lessor (the person owning the property) agrees, the lessee (the person renting the property) may have a dog on the premises.

Parentheses are used to enclose figures that enumerate items.

Example: The book contained chapters on (1) capitalization, (2) spelling rules, (3) troublesome verbs, and (4) punctuation.

Parentheses are also used to enclose citations of authority.

Example: The definition of action is "the process or state of being active" (*American College Dictionary*).

Parentheses are used to enclose figures repeated for clarity, as in legal documents:

Example: He was willed five thousand dollars ($5,000) by his uncle.

Example: You will be paid twenty (20) percent interest.

Parenthetical Elements

Nonessential information that is added to a sentence is called a **parenthetical element**. A parenthetical element is usually set apart from the main text by a comma or a pair of commas.

Example: The Lake Texoma bridge, <u>which connects Durant to Kingston</u> [parenthetical element], was originally designed by my grandfather.

Participle

A **participle** is a verb that acts like an adjective.

Example: The <u>running</u> dog chased the <u>speeding</u> [participles] car.

A **present participle** describes a present condition, while a past participle describes something that has already happened.

Example: Moses saw the <u>burning</u> [present participle] bush.

Example: The <u>burned</u> [past participle] tree fell down in the storm.

Participial Phrase

Present participles (verbals ending in *-ing*), past participles (verbals ending in *-ed*), or other irregular verbs can be combined with complements and modifiers to create a **participial phrase**. Participial phrases always act as adjectives. When they begin a sentence, they are set apart by a comma just like an introductory modifier. If they appear within the sentence, they are set apart with a pair of commas.

Example: <u>Working around the clock</u> [participial phrase], the workers repaired the airport runway in less than a week. The concrete, <u>having been damaged by the crash landing of the airliner,</u> needed to be replaced.

Parts of Speech

The eight parts of speech are:

- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs

- Pronouns
- Prepositions
- Conjunctions
- Interjections or determiners

Party

Party can be used to refer to a person in legal documents, but the word is too formal for common use. A party can also be a celebration.

Incorrect: The party I called was disturbed.

Correct: The person I called was disturbed.

Correct (in legal documents): The party of the second part hereby agrees …

Correct: He celebrated his birthday with a party.

Passed, Past

When referring to a period of time or distance, use *past*.

Example: We've always had good luck on these types of projects in the past.

When referring to movement, use *passed*.

Example: ABC just passed us to become number one in our market.

Passive Voice

Verbs can be either **active** or **passive** in voice. In the active voice, the subject is the do-er or be-er, and the verb describes an action. See *Active Voice*.

Example: The student <u>used</u> the computer.

In the passive voice, the subject is not a do-er or be-er. Instead, the subject is being acted on by something else.

Example: The computer <u>was used</u> by the student.

The passive voice has its uses. When it is more important to draw attention to the person or thing that was acted on, the passive voice can be used.

Example: Several quality control errors were made last month by <u>the third shift</u>.

The passive voice is also appropriate when the subject is not important.

Example: <u>The football tickets</u> can be picked up at the Will Call window.

The passive voice is sometimes required for technical writing, where the do-er or be-er can be anyone, and the process being described is more important.

Example of when the subject is not important: We developed a hard drive that can store several terabytes of data.

Example of emphasis on the process: A hard drive has been developed that can store several terabytes of data.

The passive voice is created by combining a form of the *to be* verb with the past participle of the main verb. Only transitive verbs (those that have objects) can be transformed into the passive voice. Some transitive verbs cannot be transformed into passive voice, such as *to have*.

Example in active voice: She has a new computer.

Example in passive voice: A new computer is had by her.

Other verbs that cannot be used with the passive voice are *resemble, look like, equal, agree with, mean, contain, hold, comprise, lack, suit, fit,* and *become*.

Past Perfect Progressive Tense

Past perfect progressive or **past perfect continuous** is used to describe events that were not finished when another event occurred. It is formed using *have been + -ing*.

Example: In November, I'll <u>have been living</u> [past perfect progressive] here for twenty-two years.

Past Perfect Tense

The **past perfect tense** is used to describe events that happened before another event or time period. Past perfect tense is formed using the verb *had* plus the past participle.

Example: After he was hired, we <u>had hoped</u> [past perfect] he would be a great leader.

An old term for past perfect tense is **pluperfect**.

Past Progressive Tense

Past progressive is used to describe events that were happening at some point in the past. Past progressive is used to indicate that something took place while something else was happening. It is formed using the past simple tense of *to be + -ing*.

Example: I <u>was eating</u> [past progressive] dinner, when the telemarketer called.

Past Simple Tense

Past simple tense is used to describe events that occurred in the past. Past simple tense is formed by adding *-ed* to the base form of regular verbs or *-d* if the verb already ends in *e*.

Example: I <u>liked</u> the play.

Example: I <u>walked</u> around the neighborhood this morning.

Irregular verbs change form to make past simple tense.

Example: I <u>ate</u> dinner after returning last evening.

People

People refers to a large group of individuals. When referring to people of a particular organization or place, it's better to use *people* before the name.

Incorrect: The General Motors people.

Correct: the people of General Motors, the people of Massachusetts

Per

Avoid using *per* and instead use *according to*.

Incorrect: The report was created per the manager's instructions.

Correct: The report was created according to the manager's instructions.

Percent

This is one word following an amount, never *per cent*.

Correct: Six percent interest was charged.

Percentage

Consider the following rules when using *percentage* or percentage signs in your writing:

■ Use *percentage* when no amount is given.

Example: What percentage of interest was charged?

■ The numeral is retained whether or not a percentage sign is used.

Example: 5% price reduction

Example: loss of 10 percent

Example: almost 30 percent of the population

■ For percentages in succession, use the sign after each numeral.

Example: 30% to 50%; 6%, 8%, and 10%

Perfect Aspect

The **perfect aspect** tense is used to describe completed events that are currently relevant or were relevant at a specific time. It is formed using the verb *to have* plus the past participle.

Example: He <u>has worked</u> on my team for sixteen years.

Perfect Infinitive

See *Infinitives*.

Perfect Tense

Perfect tense is a category of tenses that includes:

■   **Past perfect**—*had* + past participle.

■   **Present perfect**—*have* + past participle.

■   **Future perfect**—*will have* + past participle.

■   **Conditional perfect**—*would have* + past participle.

Period

A **period** is used at the end of a declarative sentence to denote a full pause:

Example: I am going to town. You may go with me if you wish.

Use a period, not a question mark, when the sentence contains an indirect question.

Example: He could not understand why she was leaving.

Also use a period for a request phrased as a question.

Example: Will you please return the diskette when you are finished.

The period is used in decimals to separate a whole number from a decimal fraction.

Example: 5.6 percent, $19.50

A period is also used in abbreviations.

Example: Mrs., Ph.D., etc.

Person

Person involves the use of pronouns used as subjects of a sentence or clause. Categories of person include:

■ First person singular—The subject is the writer or speaker.

■ First person plural—The writer is part of a group that is the subject.

■ Second person singular—The subject is the reader or listener.

■ Second person plural—The audience is the subject.

■ Third person singular—Someone else, a third person, is the subject.

■ Third personal plural—The subject is a group that does not include the writer or the reader.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns change form, or **case**, according to their use in a sentence. Consider the following guidelines:

■ The pronoun *I* is used as the subject of a sentence.

  Example: I am tall.

■ The pronoun *me* is used as an object in various ways.

  Example: He gave me a bonus.

■ The pronoun *my* is used for the possessive form.

  Example: That's my password.

The same is true for other personal pronouns: the singular *you* and *he/she/it* and the plurals *we, you,* and *they.*

Table 2.21 shows the various cases for pronouns.

Table 2.21 Cases for Pronouns

	Subjective	**Possessive**	**Objective**
Singular first person	I	my, mine	me
Singular second person	you	your, yours	you
Singular third person	he, she, it	his, her, hers, its	him, her, it
Plural first person	we	our, ours	us
Plural second person	you	your, yours	you
Plural third person	they	their, theirs	them
Relative and interrogative pronouns	who, whoever, which, that, what	whose	whom, whomever which, that, what
Indefinite pronouns	everybody	everybody's	everybody

When a personal pronoun is connected by a conjunction to another noun or pronoun, it does not change case.

> **Example:** I am taking a course in PowerPoint. John and I are taking a course in PowerPoint. (Note in the second sentence that *John* is listed before *I*.)

The same is true when the object form is used.

> **Example:** The instructor gave the PowerPoint User Guide to me.
> The instructor gave the PowerPoint User Guide to John and me.

When a pronoun and a noun are combined, you must choose the case of the pronoun that would be appropriate if the noun were not there.

> **Example:** We teachers are demanding a raise.

With the second person, there's not as much confusion because the pronoun *you* is the same for both subject and object form.

Example: <u>You</u> teachers are demanding too much money.

Among the possessive pronoun forms are nominative possessives such as *mine, yours, ours,* and *theirs.*

Example: This new house is mine. Look at those houses. Theirs needs work. Ours is in good shape. Mine is newer than yours.

Personification

Giving human feelings and characteristics to nonliving things is a figure of speech called **personification**.

Example: My computer hates me.

Persuade, Convince

See *Convince, Persuade.*

Phase, Faze

See *Faze, Phase.*

Phatic Speech

Phatic speech involves words or phrases that are used in social settings to be polite rather than to be taken literally. Phatic speech is conversational informal speech.

Example: How are you doing? Fine, how are you? Thank you. You're welcome.

Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs consist of a verb along with another word or phrase. The word that is joined with the verb is a **particle**.

Phrasal verbs often include a preposition and are used for casual and conversational phrases.

Example: The carpenters were <u>sitting around</u> eating lunch.

Example: He <u>looked up</u> his old customers in the database.

Phrasal verbs are often unclear. Avoid using them in business writing.

Phrases

Phrases are groups of words that do not include a subject and verb. A **clause** is a group of words that includes a subject and verb. The types of phrases are:

- **Noun phrases**—a noun and its modifiers

Example: He ran briskly down <u>the zigzagging path.</u>

- **Prepositional phrase**—a preposition, a noun or pronoun, and sometimes an adjective

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Example: <u>On this side of the street,</u> there are no sidewalks.

- **Appositive phrase**—renaming a preceding word

Example: My favorite football player, <u>a Heisman Trophy winner and number one draft pick,</u> played in three Super Bowl games.

- **Absolute phrase**—a noun or pronoun, a participle, and modifiers

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Example: <u>Their backpacks bulging with supplies,</u> the students waited at the bus stop on the first day of school.

- **Infinitive phrase**—an infinitive and any modifiers or complements

  ---
  Example: His plan to write a little each day resulted in a finished manuscript by the end of November.

- **Gerund phrase**—verbals that end in *-ing* that act like nouns along with modifiers or complements

  ---
  Example: Mike enjoyed playing the guitar in the echoing hallway.

- **Participial phrase**—verbals combined with complements and modifiers that act as adjectives

  ---
  Example: The house, vacant since late last year, is now slowly falling apart.

Phrases and Words to Omit

Table 2.22 presents a list of words that are usually not necessary in a sentence.

Table 2.22 Unnecessary Words

all things considered	as a matter of fact
as far as I'm concerned	at the present time
because of the fact that	by means of
by virtue of the fact	due to the fact
extremely	for all intents and purposes
for the most part	for the purpose of
have a tendency to	in a manner of speaking
in a very real sense	in my opinion
in the case of	in the event that
in the final analysis	in the nature of

Table 2.22 *(continued)*

in the process of	it seems that
quite	really
severely	the point I am trying to make
type of	very
what I mean to say is	

Pidgin

Pidgin is a type of simple language that develops when people who do not speak the same language are required to communicate in order to live or work together.

Plagiarism

The use of written or spoken material including paragraphs, sentences, artwork, or research statistics without providing credit is called **plagiarism**.

Plagiarism can be avoided by paraphrasing and rewriting and by providing credit in the form of sources or acknowledgments.

Sources for quotes, facts, or research can be cited immediately after a borrowed statement or idea.

> **Example:** See *Documenting Sources* in Section 1: The Writing Process

Pleonasm

Using more words than are really necessary or using redundant words or phrases is a stylistic problem called **pleonasm**. Pleonasm weakens a document and is distracting to readers.

Pluperfect

See *Past Perfect Tense*.

Plurals

The general rule is to form the plural of a noun by adding *s*.

Example: book, books; clock, clocks; pen, pens

A noun ending in *o* preceded by a vowel takes an *s* for the plural.

Example: curio, curios; folio, folios; radio, radios; ratio, ratios;
studio, studios

Some nouns ending in *o*, preceded by a consonant, take *es* to form the plural, whereas others take *s*.

Example: banjo, banjos; buffalo, buffaloes; cargo, cargoes; Eskimo,
Eskimos; hero, heroes; mosquito, mosquitoes; motto, mottoes; piano,
pianos; potato, potatoes; soprano, sopranos; tomato, tomatoes

A singular noun ending in *ch, sh, s, x,* or *z* takes *es* for the plural.

Example: bush, bushes; chintz, chintzes; dress, dresses; inch, inches;
wax, waxes

For a noun ending in *y* preceded by a consonant, the *y* changes to *i* and *es* is added for the plural.

Example: ability, abilities; auxiliary, auxiliaries; discrepancy,
discrepancies; facility, facilities; industry, industries; lady, ladies;
society, societies

A noun ending in *y* preceded by a vowel takes only an *s* for the plural.

Example: attorney, attorneys; galley, galleys; kidney, kidneys;
monkey, monkeys; turkey, turkeys

Some plurals end in *en*.

Example: child, children; man, men; ox, oxen

For some nouns ending in *f* or *fe*, change the *f* or *fe* to *v* and add *es* for the plural.

> **Example:** calf, calves; knife, knives; leaf, leaves; life, lives; loaf, loaves; shelf, shelves

There are some exceptions.

> **Example:** bailiff, bailiffs; belief, beliefs; chief, chiefs; gulf, gulfs; roof, roofs

Some nouns require a vowel change for the plural.

> **Example:** foot, feet; goose, geese; mouse, mice; tooth, teeth

The plurals of numerals, signs, and letters are shown by adding an *s* (or *'s* to avoid confusion).

> **Example:** one B, four B's

For proper names ending in *s* or in an *s* sound, add *es* for the plural.

> **Example:** Brooks, the Brookses; Burns, the Burnses; Jones, the Joneses

A compound noun, when hyphenated or when consisting of two separate words, forms the plural form in the most important element.

> **Example:** attorney-general, attorneys-general; brigadier general, brigadier generals; brother-in-law, brothers-in-law; notary public, notaries public; passer-by, passersby

The plural of solid compounds (a compound noun written as one word) is formed at the end of the solid compound.

> **Example:** bookshelf, bookshelves; cupful, cupfuls; lumberman, lumbermen; stepchild, stepchildren; stepdaughter, stepdaughters

Some nouns have the same form for singular and plural.

Example: Chinese, corps, deer, salmon, sheep, vermin, wheat

Some nouns are always treated as singular.

Example: civics, mathematics, measles, milk, molasses, music, news, statistics

---

Some nouns are always treated as plural.

Example: pants, proceeds, remains, riches, scissors, thanks, trousers, tweezers

---

Plurals of Numbers

Form the plural of a numeral or other character by adding *s* or *es* to the word. If the number is a figure, use *s* or *es* depending on office policy.

Example: 5s and 6s or 5's and 6's or fives and sixes; the 1890s or the 1890's; MD88s OR MD88's

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Plus

Avoid using *plus* as a conjunction. Instead use *and*.

Incorrect: We finished the market research on schedule, plus we discovered some new opportunities in the process.

Correct: We finished the market research on schedule, and we discovered some new opportunities in the process.

P.M.

See *A.M., P.M.*

Point in Time

Avoid this term in your writing and instead use *at this time, at this point,* or *now.*

Incorrect: At this point in time, everything seems to be working smoothly on the assembly line.

Correct: At this time, everything seems to be working smoothly on the assembly line.

Polyptoton

A **polyptoton** is a figure of speech that occurs when two words from the same root word are repeated. Polyptotons are used for stylistic emphasis.

Example: "Not as a call to <u>battle</u>, though <u>embattled</u> we are."
—John F. Kennedy

Polyseme

A word with at least two related meanings is a **polyseme**.

Example: milk [the noun *milk* and the verb *to milk*], bank [the noun *bank* and the verb *to bank*]

Polysyllabic

A word with three or more syllables is **polysyllabic**.

Example: January, wonderful, important

Possessive Adjectives

Possessive adjectives are words that are used before nouns to show ownership of the noun.

Example: his, her, its, my, our, their, yours

Example: That's his motorcycle.

Possessive Case

See *Case*.

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are words that are used in place of a noun to show ownership.

Example: his, hers, its, mine, ours, theirs, yours

Example: Which one is your car? That one is mine.

Possessives

Consider the following guidelines when creating possessive forms:

- Add *'s* to a singular noun to show possession. This rule applies also to nouns that end in *s*.

    Example: Mike's car, a day's wage, Charles's plans

- Add an apostrophe to the end of a pluralized family name to show possession.

    Example: the Smiths' house

- To show possession for inanimate objects, it may be best to rewrite.

    Example: "The house's doors" might be rewritten as "the doors of the house."

■ For compound nouns, apostrophe placement determines which nouns show possession.

> **Example:** Jeff's and Cathy's dogs are in the backyard. [Each person has at least one dog.]

> **Example:** Jeff and Cathy's dogs are in the backyard. [Jeff and Cathy share ownership of the dogs.]

■ For a sentence where an appositive follows a possessive noun and renames or explains the noun, add the apostrophe to the appositive instead of the noun.

> **Example:** We need to get Dr. Early, the family doctor's advice.

Posted, Informed

Don't use *posted* in place of *informed*.

> **Incorrect:** You are well posted on the subject.
>
> **Correct:** You are well informed about Australia.

Postmodifer

A modifier that appears in a sentence after the word it modifies is called a **postmodifier**.

> **Example:** She was the girl <u>selected</u> [postmodifier] for the study.

Precede, Proceed

To go before someone or something else is to *precede*.

Example: The girls preceded the boys in the line of march.

To go forward is to *proceed.*

Example: We proceeded toward the treeline.

Predeterminers

Predeterminers are words that appear before other determiners in a sentence. There are three types of predeterminers:

- Multipliers—double, three times, twice

  Example: Now that I'm self-employed, I'm making <u>twice</u> [multiplier] the income.

- Fractional expressions—half, one-third, three-quarters

  Example: <u>Two-thirds</u> [multiplier] of the class were recent immigrants to the United States.

- Intensifiers—quite, rather, such

  Example: His college apartment was <u>quite</u> [multiplier] a dump.

Predicates

Predicates are used to complete a sentence. The subject names the person, place, or thing that is doing something. A simple predicate consists of a verb, verb string, or a compound verb.

Example: The flower <u>bloomed</u> [predicate]. The flowers <u>have been blooming.</u>

A **compound predicate** consists of two or more predicates connected.

> **Example:** The mountain biker <u>began to ride down the trail</u> and <u>eventually entered one of the most beautiful valleys in the area.</u>

A **complete predicate** consists of a transitive verb and all modifiers and other words that complete its meaning.

> **Example:** The slowly moving thunderstorm <u>flashed lightning across the dark foreboding sky.</u>

A **predicate adjective** follows a linking verb and describes the subject of the sentence.

> **Example:** The minerals in the water taste <u>bad.</u>

A **predicate nominative** follows a linking verb and describes what the subject is.

> **Example:** Linda Wauson is <u>president</u> of the firm.

Preface

A **preface** is an introduction to a book written by the author to:

■ Acknowledge help and assistance provided.

■ Explain how the project was started and the origin of the idea for the book.

A **prologue** is similar to a preface, except that it introduces the book and is written in the voice of the book's text, rather than the author's first-person voice.

Prefixes

Prefixes are letters that are added before a word that modify the meaning. Some prefixes show a change in quantity from the original word.

Example: <u>semi</u>annual, <u>kilo</u>meter, <u>milli</u>meter, <u>bi</u>monthly

Some prefixes show negation or the opposite of the original meaning of the word.

Example: illegal, invalid, misjudge, counterclockwise

Some prefixes show a change in time.

Example: postwar, preschool

Some prefixes show a change in direction or position.

Example: circumnavigate, recede, infrastructure

Premodifier

A modifier that is placed before the word it modifies is called a **premodifier**.

Example: That's a <u>big</u> [premodifier] report.

Premodifiers help define and describe the words they modify. The most common premodifiers are adjectives; however, nouns can also serve in this function.

Example: He responded to an <u>angry</u> [adjective] caller.

Example: He was a <u>right-wing</u> [noun] radio talk show host.

Prepositional Phrase

A **prepositional phrase** consists of a preposition, a noun or pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition, and an adjective or two that modifies the object.

Prepositional phrases usually tell us when or where something is happening.

Example: in a half hour, at the community center

A prepositional phrase used at the beginning of a sentence is called an **introductory modifier**. You can set apart an introductory modifier with a comma; however, the comma is optional unless the introductory modifier is long.

Prepositions

Prepositions are used to describe relationships between other words in a sentence. Prepositions like *in, on,* or *between* are good examples because they describe the spatial nature of things.

Prepositions are almost always combined with other words to become prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases consist of a preposition and a determiner, along with an adjective or two, followed by a pronoun or noun that is called the "object of the preposition."

Prepositions can be divided into types:

- Prepositions of time

- Prepositions of place

- Prepositions of location

- Prepositions of movement

Prepositions of Time: At, On, In, For, *and* Since

At, on, and *in* often serve as prepositions of time. We use *at* to designate specific times.

Example: Meet me at five o'clock.

We use *on* to designate days and dates.

Example: I work all day on Saturdays.

We use *in* for nonspecific times.

Example: He likes to read in the evening.

The preposition *for* is used to measure time.

Example: He worked for twenty years.

The preposition *since* is used with a specific date or time.

Example: I have known him since January 2003.

Prepositions of Place: At, On, In

At, on, and *in* can also serve as prepositions of place. We use *at* for specific addresses.

Example: I live at 5203 Legendary Lane.

We use *on* to designate streets.

Example: I live on Legendary Lane.

We use *in* for the names of towns, states, and countries.

Example: I live in Acworth.

Prepositions of Location: At, On, In

At, on, and *in* can be used as prepositions of location. Their usage is specific to certain places.

Example: at class, at home, at the library, at the office, at school, at work

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Example: on the bed, on the ceiling, on the floor, on the horse, on the plane, on the train

> **Example:** in the bed, in the bedroom, in the car, in the class, in the library, in the room, in the school

Prepositions of Movement: To, Toward

The preposition *to* is used to express movement to a place.

> **Example:** I am driving to work.

Toward and *towards* are also used to express movement. They are both the same word with a spelling variation. Avoid using *towards* in business writing, since its usage is out of date.

> **Example:** We were working toward a common goal.

Combinations

Some prepositions are so commonly used with particular nouns, adjectives, and verbs that they have almost become one word.

The following is a list of noun-and-preposition combinations:

- approval of
- awareness of
- belief in
- concern for
- confusion about
- desire for
- fondness for
- grasp of
- hatred of
- hope for
- interest in
- love of
- need for
- participation in
- reason for
- respect for
- success in
- understanding of

The following is a list of adjective-and-preposition combinations:

- afraid of
- angry at
- aware of
- capable of
- careless about
- familiar with
- fond of
- happy about
- interested in

- jealous of
- made of
- married to
- proud of
- similar to
- sorry for
- sure of
- tired of
- worried about

A combination of a verb and a preposition is called a **phrasal verb**. The word that is joined with the verb is called a **particle**. The following is a list of verb-and-preposition combinations:

- apologize for
- ask about
- ask for
- belong to
- bring up
- care for
- find out
- give up
- grow up
- look for
- look forward to

- look up
- make up
- pay for
- prepare for
- study for
- talk about
- think about
- trust in
- work for
- worry about

Present Infinitive

See *Infinitives*.

Present Participle

The **present participle** is a form of the verb *to be* that indicates ongoing action.

Example: I am <u>eating</u> [present participle].

Example: I am t<u>alking.</u>

A present participle can also serve as an adjective in a sentence to modify a noun.

Example: She is an <u>amazing</u> person.

Present Perfect Tense

The **present perfect tense** is used for unfinished past actions, for actions where no time is specified, or when a past action is important now. It is formed by using the verb *have* + past participle.

Example: I <u>have lived</u> [present perfect] here for twenty years.

Example: <u>Have</u> you <u>seen</u> that new movie?

Example: I'<u>ve overslept</u> and <u>missed</u> my meeting.

Present Progressive Tense

The **present progressive tense** is used to describe how long something occurred in the past or for activities that started in the past and are still happening now. It is formed using the verbs *have* + *been* + present participle.

Example: I <u>have been waiting</u> [present progressive] here for you.

Present Simple Tense

The **present simple tense** is used to state facts or for regular repeated actions.

Example: I <u>like</u> [present simple] chocolate.

Example: I <u>go</u> to the factory at six.

Press, Type, Click, Strike, Hit, Select

When writing instructions for computer and software usage, use the following guidelines to describe keyboard actions:

■ Press—when a keyboard key interaction is needed to perform a particular function

---

Example: Press Y to continue.

Do not use *depress, strike, hit,* or *type* for these types of keyboard interactions.

■ Use—for navigation purposes with an arrow key or when multiple keys are pressed at the same time to initiate a command

---

Example: Use the arrow keys to move up or down in the document.

■ Type—when a user enters information that appears on the screen

---

Example: Type your user ID.

■ Click—when using the mouse to make a selection

Example: Click the File menu.

■ Select—when marking or highlighting text in a document, when adding checks to checkboxes, or when picking an item from a list

Example: Select the desired text, then click Copy.

Example: From the list of values, select your choice.

Previous

Avoid using *previous* as in "our previous discussion." Instead use *earlier*.

Incorrect: In our previous discussion, you mentioned you might be interested in ordering a new delivery truck.

Correct: Earlier, you mentioned you might be interested in ordering a new delivery truck.

Principal, Principle

Principal can be the person—someone who runs a school or an important person such as the owner of a business—or it can be the amount borrowed in a loan.

Example: The principal actors had their own private trailers on the movie set.

Principle is a code of conduct usually involving law or a doctrine.

Example: The conversation was about the principle of subsidiarity.

Problem Pronouns

Pronouns in the nominative case—*I, we, he, she, they*—serve as subjects of verbs but never as objects of verbs or prepositions.

You can often tell that the case is wrong because the sentence sounds odd; however, when compound subjects or compound objects are used, it may be difficult to "hear" the correct case.

To test such an instance, drop the other subject or object and repeat the sentence with only the pronoun in question.

I: *Nominative Case, Never an Object*

Incorrect: This is just between you and I.

Correct: This is just between you and me.

Incorrect: He asked that the money be given to you and I.

Test: He asked that the money be given to I.

Correct: He asked that the money be given to you and me.

Test: He asked that the money be given to me.

She, He: *Nominative Case, Never an Object*

Incorrect: If you stay there, the ball will hit you and she.

Test: If you stay there, the ball will hit she.

Correct: If you stay there, the ball will hit you and her.

Test: If you stay there, the ball will hit her.

They: *Nominative Case, Never an Object*

Incorrect: I will give the money to you and they.

Test: I will give the money to they.

Correct: I will give the money to you and them.

Test: I will give the money to them.

Incorrect: You and them are welcome to come.

Test: Them are welcome to come.

Correct: You and they are welcome to come.

Test: They are welcome to come.

We: *Nominative Case, Never an Object*

Incorrect: Us boys are ready to play the game.

Test: Us are ready to play the game.

Correct: We boys are ready to play the game.

Test: We are ready to play the game.

Me, Us, Her, Him, Them: *Objective Case, Never a Subject*

■ Pronouns in the objective case—*me, us, her, him, them*—are always used as objects of either verbs or prepositions, never as subjects.

■ With a compound object, use the same way of testing, changing the number of the verb as needed.

Incorrect: Jim and me went to the movies.

Test: Me went to the movies.

Correct: Jim and I went to the movies.

Test: I went to the movies.

Better: Jim went to the movies with me.

Incorrect: Julie and us sat on the top bleacher.

Test: Us sat on the top bleacher.

Correct: Julie and we sat on the top bleacher.

Test: We sat on the top bleacher.

Better: Julie sat on the top bleacher with us.

Incorrect: Tommy and her [him, us, them] argued every day.

Test: Her [him, us, them] argued every day.

Correct: Tommy and she [he, we, they] argued every day.

Proceed, Precede

See *Precede, Proceed.*

Progressive Verbs

Progressive verbs, which indicate something that is being or happening, are formed by the present participle form (ending in *-ing*) and an auxiliary.

Example: She <u>is</u> [auxiliary] <u>crying</u> [present participle]. She <u>was crying.</u> She <u>will be crying.</u> She <u>has been crying.</u> She <u>had been crying.</u> She <u>will have been crying.</u>

The progressive form occurs only with **dynamic verbs** (verbs that show the ability to change). There are five types of dynamic verbs:

■ Activity verbs

Example: ask, play, work, write, say, listen, call, eat

■ Process verbs

Example: change, grow, mature, widen

■ Verbs of bodily sensation

Example: hurt, itch, ache, feel

■ Transitional events verbs

Example: arrive, die, land, leave, lose

■   Momentary verbs

Example: hit, jump, throw, kick

Stative verbs describe a quality that is incapable of change. There are two classifications of stative verbs:

■   Verbs of inert perception and cognition

Example: guess, hate, hear, please, satisfy

■   Relational verbs

Example: equal, possess, own, include, cost, concern, contain
---

Pronouns

Usually **pronouns** refer to a noun, an individual or group, or a thing whose identity has been made clear previously.

The word a pronoun substitutes for is called its **antecedent**.

Example: Amanda accepted Nick's proposal. <u>She</u> [Amanda,
the antecedent for "she" and "her"] knew <u>he</u> [Nick, the antecedent]
was the right guy for <u>her</u> [Amanda].

Not all pronouns refer to an antecedent.

Example: <u>Everyone</u> [no antecedent] on this floor charges over
one hundred dollars an hour.

The types of pronouns are:

■   Personal—*you, him, it, us, them.*

■   Demonstrative—*this, that, these, those.*

■   Indefinite—*all, any, anybody, anyone, everyone.*

- ■ Relative—*whoever, whomever, whichever.*

- ■ Reflexive—*myself, yourself, herself.*

- ■ Intensive—*they themselves, I myself, the president himself.*

- ■ Interrogative—*who, whom, which, what.*

- ■ Reciprocal—*each other, one another.*

Pronouns and Antecedent Agreement

A pronoun usually refers to its antecedent and the two words must agree in number. If the antecedent is plural, the pronoun must be plural. If the antecedent is singular, the pronoun must be singular.

Certain pronouns like *anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, someone, somebody,* and *nobody* are always singular.

> **Example:** <u>Anyone</u> [antecedent] who says such a thing <u>is</u> [singular verb] just plain wrong.

The same is true for *either* and *neither.* Even though they seem to be referring to two things, they are singular.

> **Example:** <u>Neither</u> Payal nor Charu <u>is</u> correct.

In other cases, the determination of singular or plural depends on what the pronoun refers to—a single person or a group.

> **Example:** <u>The person</u> who broke my window <u>is</u> still unknown.

> **Example:** <u>The people</u> who have been without power <u>are</u> now complaining.

One of the most frequently asked grammar questions is regarding the pronoun *who (who, whose, whom, whoever,* and *whomever).* A good way to understand the uses for *who* is to compare it with the pronouns *he* and *they.* Table 2.23 shows the comparisons between the pronoun *who* and the pronouns *he* and *they.*

Table 2.23 The Pronoun *Who*

	Subject Form	**Possessive Form**	**Object Form**
Singular	he who	his whose	him whom
Plural	they who	their whose	them whom

One good way to choose between the various forms of *who* is to think of the sentence in terms of the choice between *he* and *him*. If *him* feels right, choose *whom*. If *he* sounds better, pick *who*.

Example: *Who* do you think is coming? [Do you think *he* is coming?]

Example: *Whom* shall we invite to the movie? [Shall we invite *him* to the movie?]

Example: Give the money to *whomever* you please. [Give the money to *him.*]

Example: Give the money to *whoever* wants it most. [*He* wants it most.]

Example: *Whoever* guesses my age will win the prize. [*He* guesses my age.]

Another related problem is confusing *whose* with *who's*. *Who's* looks like it is possessive; however, it is really a contraction of *who is*.

Example: Who's going to take the assignment?

Example: Whose glove is this?

Proper Adjectives

Proper adjectives come from proper nouns that act as adjectives to modify another noun. Proper adjectives begin with a capital letter.

Example: He was the first <u>Hispanic</u> [proper adjective] mayor in the history of the city.

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns are the name of a specific person, place, or thing. They are always capitalized.

Example: Atlanta, France, Linda

Protatis

Protatis is a term that describes an *if clause* in a conditional sentence.

Example: <u>If you buy a lottery ticket</u> [protatis], you might win a hundred million dollars.

Q

Quantifiers

Quantifiers are words that precede and modify nouns and that are used to communicate how many or how much.

Selecting the correct quantifier depends on whether they are used with a count or noncount noun. The following quantifiers can be used with count nouns:

Example: <u>many</u> [quantifier] people, a <u>few</u> people, <u>several</u> people, <u>a couple of</u> people, <u>none of the</u> people

The following quantifiers can be used with noncount nouns:

Example: <u>not much</u> eating, <u>a little</u> eating, <u>a bit of</u> eating, a <u>good deal of</u> eating, <u>no</u> eating

Question Mark

A **question mark** closes a question.

Example: What time is it?

A question mark is also used to express a doubt.

Example: He is older (?) than she.

If the question is indirect, no question mark is used.

Example: I wonder whether he will be here.

When a question is asked in the middle of a sentence, the question is set off by commas and the sentence ends with a question mark.

Example: They are arriving, aren't they, on the noon train?

When the question is enclosed in parentheses, the question mark is inside the parentheses, not at the end of the sentence.

Example: The magazine (did you see it?) describes the city in
great detail.

If the question mark is part of a quotation, it is placed inside the closing quotation mark; if it is not a part of the quotation, it is placed outside the closing quotation mark.

Example: The statement ended, "And is that all?"

Example: What did she mean by "jobless years"?

If the last word in a question is an abbreviation and thus contains a period, the question mark is also used.

Example: Do you think he will arrive by 4 p.m.?

When a statement is made into a question, the question mark is used.

Example: He is arriving today?

Example: Really?

Question Types

A variety of **question types** are used in the English language.

- Academic—a question of interest but of no particular use or value

- Embedded—a question that is in a sentence but not a question in the context of the sentence

- Hypothetical—a question of interest but having no impact on the current situation

- Leading—a question that suggests a particular answer

- Question Tag—a statement with an auxiliary verb and pronoun added to confirm the statement

- Rhetorical—a question with an obvious answer that needs no response

- Yes/No—a question that can be answered with *yes* or *no*

Quitclaim

A **quitclaim** is a legal document that gives up title to property.

Note: Using *quick claim* is incorrect.

Quit, Exit

For computer-related procedures and manuals, avoid using *quit* to close a program.

- Use *exit* to describe ending a program.

- Use *close* to describe putting away a document or window.

Quotation Marks

Double **quotation marks** are used to set off any material quoted in a sentence or paragraph.

Example: The passage he read aloud was from the first chapter: "The discovery of this energy brings us to the problem of how to allow it to be used. The use of atomic power throws us back to the Greek legend of Prometheus and the age-old question of whether force should be exerted against law. The man of today must decide whether he will use this power for destruction or for peaceful purposes." When he had finished the reading, there was loud applause.

If the quoted material consists of several paragraphs, the opening quotation mark is used at the beginning of the quotation and at the beginning of each paragraph within the quotation.

A closing quotation mark, however, is used only at the conclusion of the quotation. It is not used at the end of each paragraph in the quotation, as many people mistakenly think.

Quotations Within Quotations

Single quotation marks indicate a quotation within the quotation.

> **Example:** He said, "Did you hear John make the statement, 'I will not go with her,' or were you not present at the time he spoke?"

Quotations for Titles

In printed text, the titles of essays, articles, poems, stories, or chapters are set off in quotation marks; titles of plays, books, and periodical publications are italicized.

> **Example:** The name of the article is "I Believe."

> **Example:** The title of the book is *Project Bloom*.

> **Example:** The article "A Brave Man's Journey" was first published in *Harper's Magazine.*

Quotation Marks and Punctuation

Place the close quotation mark outside the comma and the period.

> **Example:** "Don't stop now," he said, "when you have so little left to finish."

Place the close quotation mark inside the colon and the semicolon.

Example: He called her a "little witch"; that was right after she broke his model plane.

Place the close quotation mark outside an exclamation point or a question mark when the quoted material itself is an exclamation or a question.

Example: "I passed my test!"

Example: Her response was, "Did he really say that?"

Place the close quotation mark inside an exclamation point or a question mark when the quoted material alone is not an exclamation or a question.

Example: I can't believe he actually used the word "idiot"!

Example: Didn't he claim to be "too tired"?

R

Raise, Rise

Raise is a transitive verb and always takes an object. *Rise* is an intransitive verb and never takes an object.

Correct: They raise <u>the question</u> [object] at every meeting.

Correct: I rise to make a motion.

Rational, Rationale

Rational is an adjective that means logical or reasonable. *Rationale* is a noun that means a belief or controlling principle.

Correct: Any rational person would agree.

Correct: My rationale is that centralizing control destroys individual initiative.

Real

Don't use *real* when you really mean *very.*

Incorrect: He is real assertive.

Correct: He is very assertive.

Reciprocal Pronouns

The **reciprocal pronouns**, *each other* and *one another,* are used to express mutuality.

Example: My brother and I always give each other a hard time.

If more than two people are involved, use *one another.*

Example: The team members gave one another high fives.

Reciprocal pronouns can also take the possessive form.

Example: They borrowed each other's clothes.

Recur, Reoccur

Recur means to return to, to come back, or to occur again and again.

Example: The problem recurred yesterday for the tenth time.

Recurrence means one of several repetitions.

Example: If there's a recurrence of the fever, you must see the doctor.

Reoccur means a single repetition.

Example: The creaking sound in the attic reoccurred an hour later.

Related words include *reocurrence* and *recurrent.*

Redundancy

Although a well-rounded writing style includes compound and complex sentences, it is important to avoid **redundancy**, that is, saying the same thing twice. Table 2.24 presents a list of some of the most common redundant phrases.

Table 2.24 Common Redundant Phrases

12 midnight	12 noon
1 a.m. in the morning	circle around
close proximity	completely unanimous
continue on	cooperate together
each and every	enclosed herewith
end result	exactly the same
final completion	free gift
in spite of the fact that	in the field of
in the event of	new innovations
one and the same	particular interest
period of *x* days	personally, I think
personal opinion	refer back
repeat again	return again
revert back	shorter in length
small in size	summarize briefly
surrounded on all sides	the future to come
there is no doubt but	we are in receipt of

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns indicate that the subject in a sentence also receives the action of the verb. Reflexive pronouns are formed by adding *-self* or *-selves* to the pronoun.

Example: People who cheat on their taxes are only hurting <u>themselves</u> [reflexive pronoun].

Whenever a reflexive pronoun is in a sentence, the sentence must contain a person to whom the pronoun can reflect.

> **Incorrect:** Please give the food to <u>myself.</u> [The sentence contains no other subject such as "I."]

> **Example:** I gave <u>myself</u> the credit.

Reflexive pronouns are the same as intensive pronouns (*myself, yourself, herself, himself, ourselves,* and *themselves*). There is a tendency to use reflexive and intensive pronouns (ending in *-self*) when they are not appropriate.

> **Incorrect:** These books will be read by <u>myself</u>.
>
> **Correct:** These books will be read by <u>me</u>.

The indefinite pronoun *one* has its own reflexive form.

> **Example:** One must trust <u>oneself</u>.

Other indefinite pronouns use either *himself* or *themselves* as reflexives.

Regard, Regards

When making a reference to something, write *with regard to*. At the end of correspondence, write *regards*.

Regardless is often used as an adverb that means despite everything. The word *irregardless* is nonstandard and should not be used.

Regular Verbs

Regular verbs take an *-ed* to form the past simple and past participle tenses.

> **Example:** talk, talked

Regular verbs that end in *e* take a *-d* to form these tenses.

> **Example:** joke, joked

Relative Adverbs

Adjectival clauses can be introduced by **relative adverbs**: *where, when,* and *why.*

The relative word itself serves in an adverbial function, modifying the verb in the clause. The relative adverb *where* begins a clause that modifies a noun of place.

> **Example:** My family now lives in the town <u>where</u> [modifies "used to be"] my grandfather used to be sheriff. [The entire clause modifies the noun "town."]

A *when* clause modifies nouns of time.

> **Example:** My favorite day of the week is <u>Friday, when</u> the weekend is about to begin.

A *why* clause modifies the noun *reason*.

> **Example:** Do you know the <u>reason why</u> school is out today?

Sometimes the relative adverb is left out of these clauses and the writer substitutes *that* instead.

> **Example:** Do you know the <u>reason that</u> school is out today?

Relative Clauses

A **relative clause** modifies a noun or noun phrase in a sentence. Relative clauses are dependent clauses introduced by a relative pronoun (*that, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose,* and *of which*).

> **Example:** John said that his knee, <u>which had bothered him ever since the accident,</u> [relative clause] needed surgery.

> **Example:** Cathy didn't get the promotion, <u>which really surprised everyone in the office.</u>

Relative Pronouns

The **relative pronouns** *who, whoever, which,* and *that* relate to groups of words, nouns, and other pronouns.

Example: I don't know why she said that.

Example: This is the house that had the fire.

The pronoun *who* connects the subject to the verb within a dependent clause.

Example: That is the woman who used to be a teacher.

Choosing between *which* and *that* and between *who* and *whom* is difficult for many people. Generally, use *which* to introduce clauses that are parenthetical in nature; in other words, they can be removed from the sentence without changing the meaning of the sentence.

- A *who* clause is often set apart with a comma or a pair of commas.

- Use *that* to introduce clauses that are indispensable for the meaning of the sentence. *That* clauses are not set apart by commas.

- The pronoun *which* refers to things, *who* refers to people, and *that* usually refers to things but may also refer to people in a general way.

The expanded relative pronouns *whoever, whomever,* and *whatever* are known as **indefinite relative pronouns**. They do not define any thing or person in particular.

Example: The company will hire <u>whomever</u> [indefinite relative pronoun] it pleases.

Example: She seemed to say <u>whatever</u> came to mind.

Example: <u>Whoever</u> took the money will be punished.

What can be an indefinite relative pronoun when used to introduce a dependent clause.

Example: He will give you <u>what</u> you need for the trip.

Reoccur

See *Recur, Reoccur.*

Reported Speech

Reported speech, also called **indirect speech**, is used to express what someone else said without using his or her exact words. The characteristics of reported speech are that:

- Exact quotes and quotation marks are not used.

- Pronouns are often changed.

- Verb tense is usually changed.

Exact quote: I'm going to declare bankruptcy.

Reported speech: He said he was going to declare bankruptcy.

Restrictive Clauses

A **restrictive clause** restricts the meaning of the preceding subject.

Nonrestrictive clauses also tell you something about the preceding subject, but they do not limit the possible meaning.

Restrictive clauses normally begin with *that*. Nonrestrictive clauses normally begin with *which*.

Example: The assistant bound the reports <u>that</u> were less than 30 days old [restrictive clause; the assistant bound only the reports that were less than 30 days old].

Example: The assistant bound the reports, <u>which</u> were less than 30 days old [nonrestrictive; the assistant bound reports and all of them were less than 30 days old].

Resultative Adjective

A **resultative adjective** is placed after the noun it modifies and changes the meaning of the verb and its action on the noun.

Example: He wiped the desk <u>clean</u>.

Example: He painted the office <u>green</u>.

Resumptive Modifier

A **resumptive modifier** takes a word from a sentence that appears to be ending and adds additional information.

Example: You'll find working with Videologies to be both enlightening and rewarding—<u>enlightening due to the many innovations we'll introduce to your company, rewarding because of the enhancements to productivity your company will experience</u> [resumptive modifier].

Rhetorical Question

A **rhetorical question** is asked to make a point and when an answer is not expected. The answer for a rhetorical question is usually obvious.

Example: Who is responsible for running the company—the customers, the employees, or the managers?

Rhyme

Rhyme is a literary technique used in poetry where words at the ends of lines sound similar.

Right, Business

See *Business, Right*.

Right-click

See *Mouse Terminology*.

Rise, Raise

See *Raise, Rise*.

Roman Numerals

Roman numerals are often used in outlines and some dates. Table 2.25 contains the most commonly used Roman numerals. Table 2.26 contains common Roman dates.

Table 2.25 Most Common Roman Numerals

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
1	I	30	XXX
2	II	40	XL
3	III	50	L
4	IV	60	LX
5	V	70	LXX
6	VI	80	LXXX
7	VII	90	XC

(continues)

Table 2.25 *(continued)*

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
8	VIII	100	C
9	IX	150	CL
10	X	200	CC
11	XI	300	CCC
12	XII	400	CD
13	XIII	500	D
14	XIV	600	DC
15	XV	700	DCC
16	XVI	800	DCCC
17	XVII	900	CM
18	XVIII	1,000	M
19	XIX	1,500	MD
20	XX	2,000	MM
		3,000	MMM

Table 2.26 Common Roman Numeral Dates

1900	MCM	1980	MCMLXXX
1910	MCMX	1990	MCMXC
1920	MCMXX	2000	MM
1930	MCMXXX	2010	MMX
1940	MCMXL	2020	MMXX
1950	MCML	2030	MMXXX
1960	MCMLX	2040	MMXL
1970	MCMLXX	2050	MML

Root, Rout, Route

Root can be:

- A noun that means the part of a plant that grows beneath the ground.

- A verb that means to develop roots or to dig in the earth.

- A verb that means to applaud or cheer for someone.

Rout can be:

- A noun that means a terrible defeat or retreat.

- A verb that means to defeat soundly.

Route can be:

- A noun that means an avenue of travel such as a road.

- A verb that means to select a particular pathway.

Run

When referring to a business or organization, don't use *run* in place of *manage*.

Incorrect: He runs the bakery.

Correct: He manages the bakery.

Run-On Sentences

See *Fused Sentences*.

S

Same

Don't use *same* to refer to the subject of a sentence.

Incorrect: Your letter arrived and I acknowledge the same with thanks.

Correct: Your letter arrived and I acknowledge it with thanks.

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is a figure of speech that describes a passage where the author means the opposite of what is actually said. Sarcasm is a form of irony. Sarcastic remarks are often rude or humorous.

Example: Maybe you should talk on the phone a little louder. I don't think everyone in the office could hear your conversation.

Satire

Satire is a literary technique where an author makes fun of someone or something in order to create a negative opinion. Satire often uses humor to ridicule the subject.

An author often uses satire to express a strong opinion about someone or something in order to damage or ruin the subject of the satire.

Screen

See *Display, Monitor, Screen*.

Screen Terminology

The screen captures in Figures 2.5 to 2.9 illustrate various features of Microsoft Windows–based software for the purpose of identifying elements that may appear in software-related procedures and manuals.

Figure 2.5 Windows Desktop
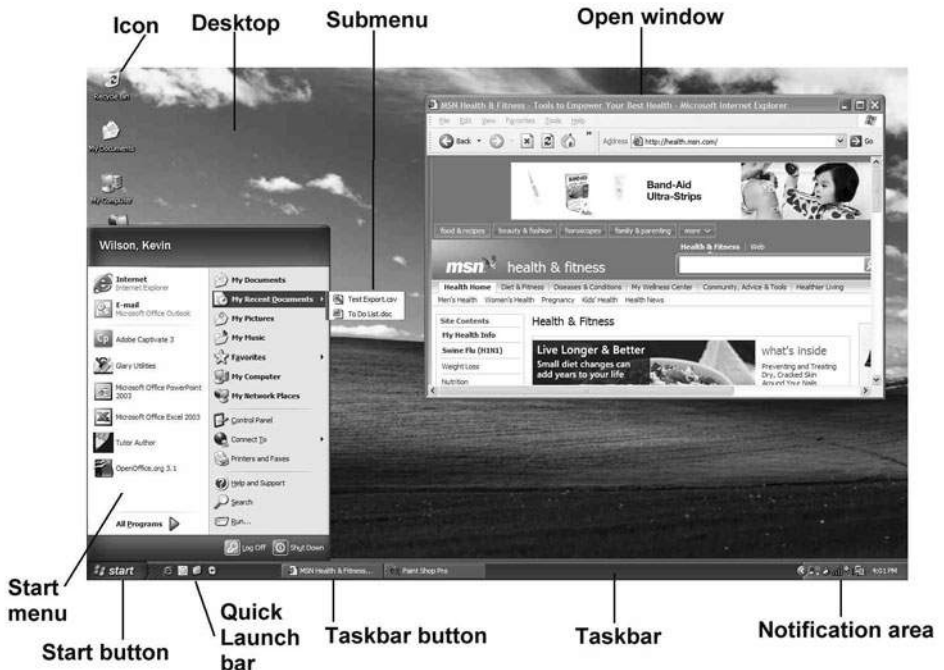
Figure 2.6 Open Window
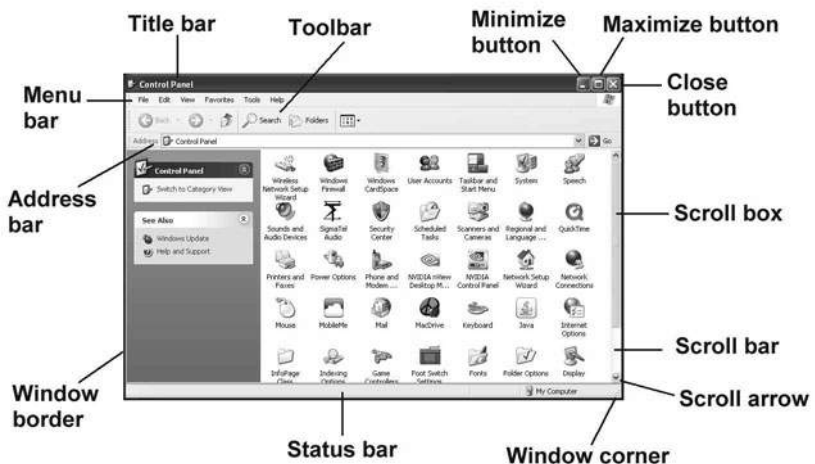
Figure 2.7 Browser Window

Figure 2.8 Web Page

Figure 2.9 Program Window
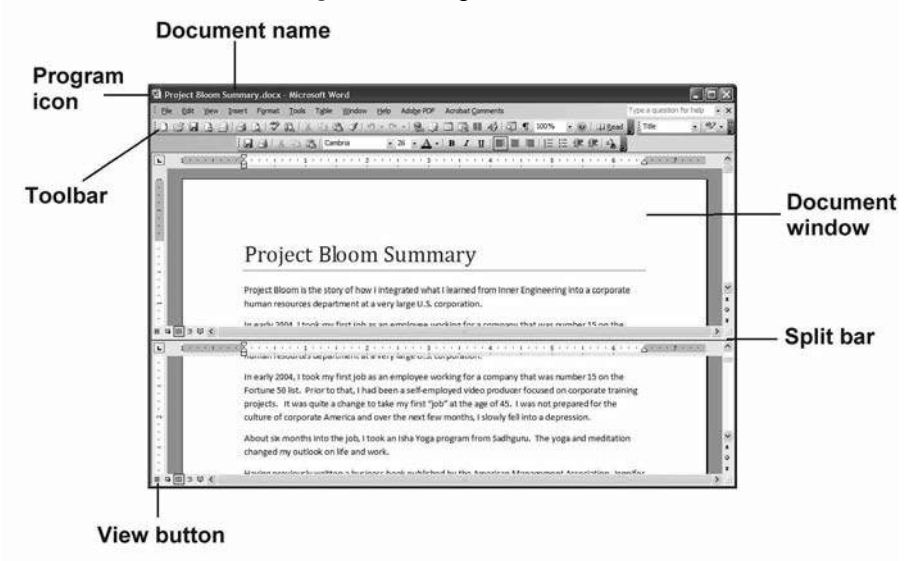
Second Conditional

The **second conditional** is used to express future actions that depend on the result of another future action. Usually, there is only a small chance both conditions will be satisfied.

The second conditional is formed with *if* + past simple tense + *would* + base form.

Example: If I found a buried treasure, I would buy my own island.

Select

See *Press, Type, Click, Strike, Hit, Select.*

Semicolon

A **semicolon** is used when the conjunction is omitted between parts of a compound sentence.

Example: I went with them; I should have stayed at home.

A semicolon precedes words such as *however, moreover,* or *otherwise* when they introduce the second of two connected full sentences.

Example: She is arriving at noon; however, she will not stay long.

If parts of a series contain inner punctuation such as a comma, the parts are separated by a semicolon.

Example: He came to see his mother, who was ill; his sister, who lived in the next town; and his old schoolmate.

Semiweekly, Semimonthly

See *Biweekly, Bimonthly, Semiweekly, Semimonthly.*

Sensor, Censor

See *Censor, Censure, Sensor, Censer.*

Sentence

A **sentence** has a subject and a verb (predicate) that can stand alone.

A sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark.

Sentence Fragments

A **sentence fragment** fails to be a sentence because it cannot stand by itself. It does not contain at least one independent clause.

A group of words may appear to be a sentence but turn out to be a sentence fragment instead for several reasons:

- The sentence fragment may contain a series of prepositional phrases without a proper subject-verb relationship.

Example: in Texas, sometime in early April, just before the bluebonnets appear

- The sentence fragment may be a verbal phrase intended to modify something that is missing.

  Example: working deep into the night in an effort to get his taxes completed

- The sentence fragment may have a subject-verb relationship, but it has been subordinated to another idea or word so that it cannot stand by itself.

  Example: although he was taller than his older brother

Sentence Subject

The **subject** of a sentence is the person, place, or thing that is the main agent in the sentence.

To find the subject of a sentence, first locate the verb. Then answer the question, what or who is being "verbed"?

Example: The monkeys in the treetops <u>must be observed</u>.
[verb; So, what must be observed? The answer is the monkeys.]

A **simple subject** is a subject without any modifiers.

Example: The upcoming <u>event</u> [simple subject], stripped of all the hype, is nothing but a fund-raiser.

Sometimes a simple subject can be more than one word or even an entire clause.

Example: <u>What he had forgotten about the law</u> was amazing considering how many years he spent in law school.

Usually, when the subject of a sentence is *you* and the sentence is a suggestion, order, or command, the *you* is left out.

Example: Get out of the way! [*You* is understood to be the subject.]

For sentence analysis, the person who initiates an action in a sentence is called the **agent**. When the active voice is used, the subject is the agent.

Example: <u>The class</u> [subject/agent] failed the test.

When the passive voice is used, the agent is not the subject. Some passive sentences don't contain an agent.

Example: The test was failed by <u>the class</u> [object of the preposition "by"].

Sentence Types

The types of sentence structures are:

■   Simple—one independent clause

Example: He went to the store.

■   Compound—more than one independent clause

Example: He went to the store, and he bought groceries.

■   Complex—one independent clause and at least one dependent clause

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Example: He went to the store, where he bought groceries.

■   Compound complex—more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause

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Example: He went to the library, and then he went to the store, where he bought groceries.

■ Periodic—beginning with modifying phrases and clauses and ending with an independent clause

Example: Having gone to the store, he bought groceries.

■ Cumulative—beginning with an independent clause and ending with a series of modifying constructions

Example: He ran his morning errands, buying groceries, dropping off his prescription, and getting cash from the ATM.

Sentence Variety

A **sentence** is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate.

How you use the many types of sentences in your writing, the order in which you use them, and how you combine and punctuate them determine your writing style.

It is relatively easy to write short sentences. However, if you use only short sentences, your writing will appear to be a primer style and give your reader a poor impression of your level of professionalism. To write more complicated sentences, you have to create constructions of clauses and phrases. Consider these tips:

■ Long sentences and run-on sentences are not the same thing.

■ Combining too long a series of clauses may confuse the reader.

■ Many writers are afraid they'll create run-on sentences and tend to lean toward the shorter variety.

By coordinating clauses and punctuation, you can allow the complexity of a sentence to develop after the verb, not before it. The key is to make the subject-verb connection and then allow the sentence to paint the picture surrounding that subject and verb.

One issue that is difficult for many business writers is the need to repeat key terms in long sentences. The repetition feels awkward. When properly handled, though, repeated phrases can create a rhythm that helps to emphasize the meaning of the sentence.

Another way to enhance sentence variety and complexity is to avoid clumsy "which clauses" and replace them with dependent clauses.

> **Example**: Atlanta continues to grow in every direction, which means that homes are rapidly replacing the fields and forests in outlying areas.
>
> **Better:** Atlanta continues to grow in every direction, as homes rapidly replace the fields and forests in outlying areas.

When used sparingly, you can create an interesting twist to a sentence by ending it with a set of prepositional phrases, each beginning with a present or past participle.

> **Example:** You'll find working with Videologies to be an excellent experience, one that will develop into a lasting relationship, into a partnership, winning future business for us all.

Remember to throw an occasional question, exclamation, or command into your writing.

■ *Questions* can be useful at the beginning of a paragraph to summarize the content that follows.

■ *Exclamations* can be used to express strong feelings.

■ *Commands* provide direction and energy by telling your readers what to do.

Occasionally, try to begin sentences with something other than the normal subject-verb combo. Consider these tips:

■ Start with a modifying clause or participial phrase.

■ Begin with a coordinating conjunction *(and, but, nor, for, yet,* or *so)*.

■ Many people think that they should never begin a sentence with *but* and that it should be linked to the previous sentence to make a compound structure. But a sentence like this calls attention to itself and can be a useful device.

Setup, Set Up

Setup is written as one word when acting as a noun or adjective.

Example: To install the software, run Setup [noun].

Example: The setup [adjective] process should take you approximately ten minutes.

Set up is written as two words when acting as a verb.

Example: Have you unpacked and set up your office?

Sexist Language

See *Unbiased Language*.

Shall, Will

Use *shall* to express a simple expected action by the first person.

Use *will* with second and third persons.

To express determination or command, reverse the order; use *will* for the first person and *shall* for the second and third.

Example: We shall go tomorrow.

Example: He will go, too.

Example: You will be at the conference by the time we arrive.

Example: I will go tomorrow.

Example: He shall go with me even if I must force him.

Example: You shall never do that again.

Shape

Don't use *shape* to refer to the status of something.

Incorrect: The transaction was completed in good shape.

Correct: The transaction was completed to everyone's satisfaction.

Should, Must

Should is used when an action is recommended but optional.

Example: I should clean the kitchen.

Must is used when an action is required.

Example: Mom said we must clean the kitchen.

Should of

See *Might of, Should of, Would of, Could of*.

Should, Would

Use *should* with the first person and *would* with the second and third persons to express expected action.

Example: I should run diagnostics again to look for errors.

> **Example:** They would expect to have dinner with us after the play.

Using *should* and *would* instead of *shall* and *will* implies a doubt that the action will take place.

Should and *would* may also be used with all persons, but in these cases the meaning of the verbs is different. *Should* may be used with all persons to show obligation. *Would* may be used with all persons to show intent or determination.

> **Correct:** A child should love his parents.

> **Correct:** If I had enough money, I would buy a car.

Shut Down, Shutdown

Shut down is two words when used as a verb.

> **Example:** You should shut down your computer during thunderstorms.

Shutdown is one word when used as a noun or adjective.

> **Example:** To turn off your computer, click Start and then Shutdown.

Sic

Sic is a Latin word that means "in such a manner." When quoting a passage that has misspelled words or poor grammar, include [*sic*], italicized and within brackets, to show that the mistakes are an accurate part of the quote.

> **Example:** Sprayed on the side of the wall was the slogan, "Eat moore chiken [*sic*]."

Sign In, Sign Out, Sign On, Sign Up

Sign in is used when entering a user ID and password to access a secure Web site. When you exit a secure Web site, you *sign out*.

Sign on is used as a noun to describe security software.

> **Example:** The Web site features a secure single sign on.

Sign up is when you register to access a secure Web site.

Simile

A **simile** is a figure of speech that is used to describe something by comparing it to something else using words such as *like* or *as*.

> **Example:** He was as nutty as a fruitcake.

> **Example:** She laughs like a hyena.

Since, Because

See *Because, Since, As*.

Singular

Singular is a grammatical term for a noun, pronoun, or verb that is used to describe something when there is only one item.

> **Example:** an office, a car, a laptop, a telephone

Plural is the grammatical term used when there is more than one item.

Sit, Set

Sit is an intransitive verb.

> **Correct:** She sits near her husband at every meeting.

Set is a transitive verb.

Correct: He sets the plates on the table in an orderly manner.

Site, Sight, Cite

See *Cite, Site, Sight*.

Slang

Slang is informal, sometimes grammatically incorrect language that is used by groups to bind the group together.

Usage of slang often spreads outside the group and becomes mainstream informal language.

Example: That's a cool hat you're wearing.

Example: He definitely has his game face on.

Slash

The **slash** is often used as shorthand or when the choice between alternatives is nebulous.

Because the slash is often ambiguous, use it with caution. The slash is used:

■   With *and*/*or* combinations.

■   To indicate other relationships between words.

And/Or Combinations

The slash can be used to indicate:

■   Options that are available.

Example: The ingredients of the drink are ice, rum, lime/lemon, and cola.

■ Equal possibilities.

Example: Dear Sir/Madam:

■ That something has more than one function.

Example: The potter worked alone in the cold garage/studio.

Indicating Other Relationships

The slash can be used to:

■ Separate elements that are being compared.

Example: The Redskins/Cowboys rivalry has a long history.

■ Separate origins and destinations.

Example: The Dallas/Atlanta flight was canceled.

■ Separate the numerals in a date.

Example: 12/31/2012

■ Indicate a period that spans two or more calendar years.

Example: For the 2011/12 school year, the eighth graders will be taking technology education for the first time.

■ Mean "per."

Example: 1000 km/hour

■ Write fractions.

Example: 1/4 + 1/4 = 1/2

Small Caps

Small caps are uppercase letters that are the same height as the surrounding lowercase letters. Small caps are often used for acronyms and abbreviations.

Example: THESE ARE SMALL CAPS.

So

Avoid overuse of this adverbial conjunction. *Consequently, therefore,* and *inasmuch as* are good substitutes when you want to vary the style.

Avoid: It had snowed over a foot that day; so we drove the jeep into town.

Better: It had snowed over a foot that day; consequently we drove the jeep into town.

Software Menus and Commands

Figure 2.10 shows an example of software menu elements.

Figure 2.10 Software Menu Terminology
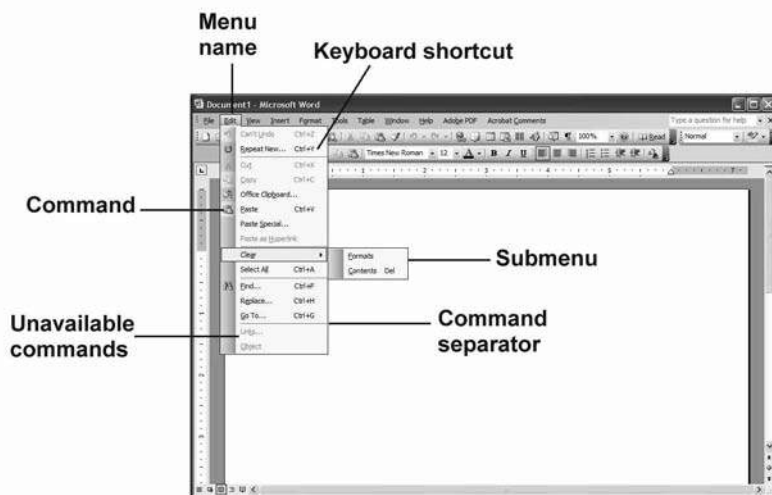
Solidus

Solidus is another name for **Slash**.

See *Slash*.

Some, Any

See *Any, Some*.

Sometime, Some Time

Sometime means occasional or at some point.

Some time means an amount of time.

Correct: I will go sometime this morning.

Correct: If I have some time this morning, I shall do the job for you.

Sort of, Kind of

See *Kind of, Sort of*.

Spaces After Periods

Only one space is needed at the end of a sentence after the period before starting another sentence. When people used typewriters, it was common to add two spaces after a period.

Split Infinitive

One of the most common writing mistakes is the **split infinitive**. An infinitive is said to be split when a word (usually an adverb) is placed between the *to* of the infinitive and the root verb.

Example: to boldly go where no man has gone before

The argument against split infinitives is based on the idea that an infinitive is a single unit and should not be divided. Because it is so easy to spot, many writers try to avoid a split. However, many style guides now say the rule against splitting infinitives can be ignored. To avoid the criticism, it is a good rule to avoid split infinitives in business writing.

Sr., Jr.

See *Jr., Sr.*

Stative Adjective

A **stative adjective** describes a condition or state that is not easily changed.

Example: large, blue, little

Stative Verb

See *Progressive Verbs*.

Subheadings

See *Headings and Subheadings*.

Subject

A noun, pronoun, or noun phrase that comes before the main verb in a sentence is called the **subject**.

Example: <u>She</u> [subject] went to the warehouse.

To find the subject in a sentence, ask the question, who or what did the action expressed by the verb?

Subject Complement

See *Complements*.

Subjective Case

The **subjective case**, also called **subjective pronouns**, consists of personal pronouns that can act as subjects in a sentence.

Example: I, you, he, she, it, we, they

The **objective case** consists of pronouns that act as objects in a sentence.

Example: me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them

Subjective Pronouns

See *Subjective Case*.

Subject-Verb Agreement

The basic rule of **subject-verb agreement** is that a singular subject needs a singular verb and that plural subjects require plural verbs.

Example: My brother is [singular subject and verb] a psychologist.

Example: My brothers are [plural subject and verb] psychologists.

Indefinite pronouns like *anyone, everyone, someone, no one,* and *nobody* are singular subjects and thus require singular verbs.

Example: Everyone is studying hard.

Some indefinite pronouns, such as *all* and *some,* can be singular or plural depending on whether what they are referring to is countable or not.

Example: Some of the candy <u>is</u> missing.

Example: Some of the dogs <u>are</u> barking.

One indefinite pronoun, *none,* can be either singular or plural, and it doesn't matter whether you use a singular or plural verb—that is, unless something in the sentence specifies its number.

Example: None of you <u>write</u> poetry.

Example: None of the cars <u>are</u> speeding.

Some indefinite pronouns like *everyone* and *everybody* sound as though they are talking about more than one person; however, they are both singular.

Example: Everyone is coming to the meeting.

The pronoun *each* is often followed by a prepositional phrase ending in a plural word.

Example: each of the monkeys

Each, however, is singular.

Example: Each of the monkeys is eating a banana.

Don't confuse the word *and* with the phrases *together with, as well as,* and *along with.* They do not mean the same and do not create compound subjects as *and* does.

Example: The boy, as well as his brother, is going to school.

Example: The boy and his brother are going to school.

The pronouns *neither* and *either* are singular even though they appear to be referring to two things.

Example: Neither of the two computers is obsolete.

Example: Either is a good choice for a student.

Sometimes *neither* and *either* take a plural verb when they are followed by a prepositional phrase that begins with *of*.

Example: Have either of you two kids seen my dog?

Example: Are either of you listening to me?

When the conjunctions *or* and *nor* are used, the subject closest to the verb determines whether the verb is singular or plural.

Example: Neither the bear nor the monkeys were outside when we visited the zoo.

It's also a good idea to put the plural subject closest to the verb because the sentence would be incorrect.

Example: Neither the monkeys nor the bear were outside when we visited the zoo.

The words *there* and *here* can never be subjects in a sentence. These words are used in what are called **expletive constructions** where the subject follows the verb and determines whether the verb is singular or plural.

Example: Here are my two books [subject].

Example: There better be a good reason [subject] you have them.

Verbs for third-person, singular subjects like *he, she,* and *it* have *s* endings.

Example: He loves to eat.

Sometimes modifiers slip between a subject and a verb, but they do not change the subject-verb agreement.

> **Example:** The <u>workers</u> [subject], who always seem to be standing around taking a break, gathered in a circle like a football huddle, <u>are</u> [verb] being fired.

Sometimes nouns take peculiar forms that make it confusing to tell whether they are singular or plural. Words such as *glasses, gloves, pliers,* and *scissors* are thought of as plural unless they're preceded by the phrase *pair of,* in which case *pair* becomes the subject.

> **Example:** My glasses are on the desk.

> **Example:** The pair of glasses is on the desk.

Some words that end in *s* seem to be plural but are really singular and thus require singular verbs.

> **Example:** The evening news is full of disasters.

Other words that end in *s* refer to a single thing but are actually plural and require a plural verb.

> **Example:** His assets were totally wiped out by the bankruptcy.

Fractional expressions, such as *half of* and *a percentage of,* can be either singular or plural. The same is true when words like *some, all,* and *any* serve as subjects.

> **Example:** One-half of the population is over sixty-five.

> **Example:** One-quarter of the students were absent.

> **Example:** Some of the houses are painted white.

Example: Some of the money is missing.

In a sentence that combines a positive and a negative subject and one is plural and the other singular, the verb should agree with the positive subject.

Example: The teacher not the students decides what to teach.

Subject-Verb Inversion

Normally, a sentence contains a subject and then a verb, in that order. This pattern is disturbed in only a few instances.

■ In questions

Example: Have you read that book?

■ In expletive constructions

Example: Here is your book.

■ To put focus on a particular word

Example: What's more important is his reluctance to find a job.

■ When a sentence begins with an adverb, adverbial phrase, or clause

Example: Rarely have so many been eaten in just one meal.

■ After the word *so*
    Example: I believe him; so do the people.

Subjunctive

The **subjunctive** describes a verb mood and is used to express emotions, hope, opinions, commands, and wishes.

The subjunctive mood uses the simple form of the verb without *to*. The simple form of *to go* in the subjective mood is *go*.

Example: Is it necessary that we <u>be</u> [subjunctive] there?

Example: It's time that you <u>bought</u> some new shoes.

Example: I asked that the report <u>be</u> finished this morning.

The subjunctive mood is typically used in dependent clauses. It is also called the **conjunctive mood**.

Submittal, Submission

Submittal means the act of submitting, not the item being submitted.

Use *submission* when referring to anything that is being submitted.

Incorrect: Make sure you include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submittal.

Correct: Make sure you include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission.

Correct: His submittal of the legal documents is now in question.

Subordinate Clause

A **subordinate clause** is subset within a larger clause. A **dependent clause** is a subordinate clause.

Example: I think <u>I'd like sushi</u> [subordinate clause].

The term **subordinate** describes the relationship between one clause and another in a single sentence. A sentence can have multiple subordinate clauses.

The largest clause in the sentence is called the **matrix clause** and is s**uperordinate** to any subordinate clauses nested within it.

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions are words that appear at the beginning of a subordinate or dependent clause. Subordinating conjunctions convert a clause into something that depends on the rest of the sentence for meaning.

Example: <u>Because</u> [subordinating conjunction] he loved driving fast, he often dreamed of becoming a professional race car driver.

Common subordinating conjunctions are shown in Table 2.27.

Table 2.27 Common Subordinating Conjunctions

after	although	as	as if
as long as	as though	because	before
even if	even though	if	if only
in order that	now that	once	rather than
since	so that	than	that
though	till	unless	until
when	whenever	where	whereas
wherever	while		

Suffix

Words whose roots end with *-ge* or *-ce* generally retain the *e* when a **suffix** is added.

Example: change, changeable

Example: damage, damageable

Example: disadvantage, disadvantageous

Example: outrage, outrageous

A final silent *e* is usually dropped before a suffix that begins with a vowel.

Example: argue, arguing

Example: change, changing

Example: conceive, conceivable

A final silent *e* is usually retained before a suffix that begins with a consonant.

Example: achieve, achievement

Example: definite, definitely

In words ending in *-c,* add *k* before a suffix beginning with *-e, -i,* or *-y,* so that the hard sound of the original *c* is retained.

Example: frolic, frolicked, frolicking

Example: mimic, mimicked, mimicking

Example: picnic, picnicked, picnicking

A word ending in *-ie* changes the *-ie* to *-y* when adding a suffix.

Example: die, dying

Example: lie, lying

Example: tie, tying

Example: vie, vying

Words that end in -*y* preceded by a vowel retain the *y* when adding the suffix.

Example: survey, surveying, surveyor

Words that end with -*y* preceded by a consonant change *y* to *i* when adding a suffix, except when the suffix is -*ing*.

Example: embody, embodying, embodied

Example: rely, relying, relied

Example: satisfy, satisfying, satisfied

A final consonant is usually doubled when it is preceded by a single vowel and takes a suffix.

Example: mop, mopping

A final consonant is doubled when it is followed by a suffix, and the last syllable is accented when the suffix is added.

Example: acquit, acquitted

The final consonant is not doubled when the accent is shifted to a preceding syllable when the suffix is added and when the final consonant is preceded by two vowels.

Example: refer, referring, reference

Example: fooled, fooling

Summative Modifier

A **summative modifier** renames or summarizes what has been going on earlier in the sentence and adds new information.

Example: The email etiquette seminar promises to show employees how to write effective emails, emails that get results, and emails that result in a positive image for your business—three benefits [summative modifier] that can enhance the productivity of any business.

Superlative

A **superlative** is a type of adjective or adverb that depicts something that is of a higher quality than something else. There must be three or more items compared in order to use the superlative.

The superlative is formed by adding the definite article *the,* along with either a short adjective that adds the suffix *-est* or a longer adjective that adds *most*.

Example: Mount Rainer is the tallest [superlative] volcano in North America.

Example: He is the most friendly guy on the team.

Syllable

Syllables are individual sounds that make up a word. A syllable can be said without interruption.

Most syllables have at least one vowel and other consonants before or after the vowel.

Example: *Syllable* has three syllables: syl-la-ble.

Symbols and Special Characters

Symbols and other **special characters** may be used in business documents for mathematical equations, formulas, measurements, and punctuation; they can also be employed as bullets and attention-getting characters in page layouts.

When instructing a reader to type a symbol or special character to complete a procedure, spell the name of the character and include the symbol enclosed in parentheses.

Example: In an email address, type the *at sign* (@) and a period (.) before the domain name.

Table 2.28 contains a list of symbols and special characters and their names.

Table 2.28 Symbols, Special Characters, and Their Names

Character	Name	Character	Name
´	acute accent	≥	greater than or equal to sign
&	ampersand	-	hyphen
< >	angle brackets	″	inch mark
'	apostrophe	<	less than sign
*	asterisk	≤	less than or equal to sign
@	at sign	–	minus sign
\	backslash	×	multiplication sign
{ }	braces	≠	not equal to sign
[ ]	brackets	#	number sign
^	caret or circumflex	¶	paragraph mark
¢	cent sign	( )	parenthesis
« »	chevrons	%	percent
©	copyright symbol	π	pi
†	dagger			pipe

°	degree	+	plus sign
÷	division sign	±	plus or minus sign
$	dollar sign	?	question mark
…	ellipsis	"	quotation mark
—	em dash	'	single quotation mark
–	en dash	®	registered trademark symbol
=	equal sign	§	section
!	exclamation point	/	slash
`	grave accent	~	tilde
>	greater than sign	™	trademark symbol
		_	underscore

Sympathy, Empathy

See *Empathy, Sympathy.*

Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a figure of speech where a phrase features one thing that is used to refer to a related thing.

Example: All <u>hands</u> [figure of speech for people or sailors] on deck!

Synonyms

A **synonym** is a word that has the same or a very similar meaning as that of another word. In most cases, a synonym of a word may be substituted for the original word.

Example: car, automobile; film, movie; woman, lady; happy, joyful; bad, terrible

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T

Table of Contents

A **table of contents** appears at the beginning of a document after the title page and other front matter, such as a foreword or preface. Here are some things to remember about tables of contents:

- A table of contents includes titles or descriptions for first-level headings, which serve as chapter titles, along with second-level and sometimes third-level headings, which designate sections and individual topics. Page numbers are included for each level of heading. Second- and third-level headings are normally indented three to five spaces from the first-level headings.

- Leaders, which appear as a series of periods (. . .), can be used to align the page numbers along the right side of the page.

- The table of contents pages are often numbered with lowercase Roman numerals.

- In most business documents, it is recommended that a table of contents not exceed three pages.

- A table of contents can be created automatically using word processing software if consistent heading styles are used throughout the document.

Figure 2.11 is a sample table of contents page.

Figure 2.11 Table of Contents Page Example

CONTENTS

Tables

Tables are often used in business documents to organize information for reference purposes. Consider the following tips when creating tables:

- Tables contain rows and columns and column headings.

- Tables may have an optional title that is included within the frame of the table as the first merged row.

- Use title-style capitalization for the title.

- Tables need an introductory sentence that references the table.

- The introductory sentence for a table that immediately follows should end in a period rather than a semicolon.

- Column headings should be short, precise, and written in the active voice if they are sentences.

- Capitalize the first letter of the first word in each column heading.

- Text within the table should follow sentence capitalization and punctuation rules.

- Incomplete sentences do not need a period.

- Align the text within the columns consistently for all columns.

- Organize the content in the table from left to right.

- For definitions and descriptions, put the term in the leftmost column and the definition or description in associated columns to the right.

- Text entries within the table should have parallel structure. (For example, all entries begin with an article, a noun, an action first, and so forth.)

- Avoid blank column entries. Use *not applicable* or *none*.

- Tables with long entries should be limited to two or three columns.

- If a table must be divided over two or more pages, include the table title and column headings on each new page.

- Border rules between rows are optional but should be included if the row size is inconsistent due to the length of the content.

- Footnotes should be included at the end of the table.

Table 2.29 is a sample table, illustrating these tips.

Table 2.29 Table Example

Camera resolution	2 MP	3 MP	4 MP	5 MP	6 MP
Photo dimensions	1600 × 1200	2048 × 21536	2272 × 1704	2592 × 1944	2848 × 2136
File size	0.9 MB	1.2 MB	2 MB	2.5 MB	3.2 MB

Tag Question

A **tag question** is created by adding an auxiliary verb and pronoun to the end of a statement.

Example: He's happy, <u>isn't he</u> [tag question]?

Take, Bring

See *Bring, Take*.

Tautology

A **tautology** is a figure of speech that occurs when two near-synonyms are placed together for emphasis.

Example: free gift, unsolved mystery, new innovation, suddenly without warning, added bonus

Teach, Learn

See *Learn, Teach*.

Telephone Numbers

When including telephone numbers in your documents, consider these guidelines:

■ For U.S. telephone numbers, use parentheses instead of hyphens to separate the area code from the rest of the number.

Example: (800) 555-1212

■ For U.S. phone lists, do not include a 1 to indicate long distance.

■ For international phone lists, include the country code.

■ Use parentheses to separate the country code from the rest of the number.

■ If a country code and city code are required, keep both the country code and the city code within their own set of parentheses.

■ Put the country name or initials in parentheses at the end of the number.

Example: (22) (42) 0000 000 0000 (U.K.)

Temperature

When writing about temperatures, use figures for temperatures except zero.

Example: The high temperature today was 55.

Example: It looks like the temperature may get down to zero today.

To designate temperatures below zero, use the word *minus* or *below zero* rather than a minus sign.

Example: The temperature today was minus 20.

Example: The temperature today was 20 below zero.

Optionally, you can add the word *degrees* to designate a temperature.

Example: The temperature today was 55 degrees.

For tables and other scientific documentation, you may use the degree symbol.

Example: 55°

When you must designate whether the temperature is in Fahrenheit or Celsius, use either the word or the letter *F* or *C*, separated by one space from the number and with no periods.

Example: It was 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

Example: The temperature was 55° F today.

Example: It was 11 degrees Celsius.

Example: The temperature was 11° C today.

Tense

Tense is a way of expressing when an action of a verb occurs. There are present tenses, past tenses, and future tenses. The present tense is the base form of the verb. Regular verbs add *-ed* or *-d* to the end for the past tense. Irregular verbs may change forms to form the past tense.

The present tenses are:

■   Present simple—used to say what someone usually does

Example: I commute to work every day.

■   Present progressive or continuous—used to say what someone is doing now

Example: I am reading a book.

■ Present perfect simple—used to show unfinished time

Example: The meeting has not yet started.

■ Present perfect progressive or continuous—used to say how long someone has been doing something

---

Example: She has been in a meeting for the last hour.

The past tenses are:

■ Simple past—used to show a completed action

Example: I read the report.

■ Past progressive or continuous—used to say when something was being done

---

Example: I was reading email when he called.

■ Past perfect simple—used to say when something was done by a certain time

---

Example: You had studied Spanish before moving to Mexico.

■ Past perfect progressive or continuous—used to say how long something was done for a specific time

---

Example: They had been meeting for two hours before John arrived.

The future tenses include the following:

■ Simple future—used to say what you will do in the future

Example: You are going to read the report.

■ Future progressive or continuous—used to say when something will be happening

---

Example: You will be in Mexico when the merger takes place.

- Future perfect simple—used to say something will be complete by a specific time

---

Example: You will have read all of the reports by the time the meeting starts.

- Future perfect progressive—used to say how long something will have been happening by a certain time in the future

---

Example: We will have been meeting for more than an hour when John plans to mention the contract terms.

Terabyte

A *terabyte* is equal to 1,024 gigabytes. Terabytes should not be abbreviated. Leave a space between a number and the word when used as a noun.

Example: My computer has over 3 terabytes of storage.

When used as an adjective, add a hyphen between the number and the word.

Example: I just purchased a 3-terabyte drive.

Than I, Than Me

When making a comparison between yourself and something or someone else, you will often end with a subject form or object form: "taller than I" or "taller than she" or the like.

When the comparison is made in the subjective case, normally we leave out the verb in the second clause: *am, are,* or *is.*

Example: He is taller than I [am].

Example: He is taller than she [is].

Be careful with comparisons in the objective case.

Example: I like him better than she. [You like him better than she likes him.]

Example: I like him better than her. [You are saying you like him better than you like her.]

To avoid confusion with the word *than,* add the verb or rewrite the sentence.

Example: I like him better than she does.

Example: I like him better than I like her.

Than, Then

Than is used when making comparisons or implied comparisons.

Example: Bongo would rather climb a tree than sit in his cage and eat.

Then is a conjunction, but it cannot be used as a coordinating conjunction.

Incorrect: Bongo ate an apple, then he climbed the tree.

Correct: Bongo ate an apple, and then he climbed the tree.

That, Which

In determining whether to use *that* or *which*, the choice of word depends on whether the clause that modifies the noun is a restrictive or nonrestrictive clause.

A **restrictive clause** means that the information is essential to the meaning of the sentence. Use *that* for restrictive clauses.

A **nonrestrictive clause** includes information that can be omitted without changing the meaning of the sentence. Use *which* for nonrestrictive clauses.

Incorrect: A high performance engine is an engine, which needs a high-octane fuel.

Correct: A high performance engine is an engine that needs a high-octane fuel.

When referring to people in a sentence with either a restrictive or nonrestrictive clause, use *who* instead of *that* or *which*.

There, Their, They're

Use *there* when referring to a place.

Example: Look over there at that horse.

Use *their* to indicate possession.

Example: My parents just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Use *they're* as a contraction of *they* and *are*. *They're* consists of a subject and a verb and is never used as a modifier.

Example: They're really nice to new employees here.

Third Conditional

The **third conditional** is used for imaginary past actions that could not have happened because conditions were not met.

Example: If I had studied harder, I probably would have gone to medical school.

Time

Consider the following guidelines when writing about time:

■ When a figure and a word come together as an adjective to express time, connect the two with a hyphen.

Example: a 24-hour day

But: a day of 24 hours

Example: two 2-year, 12-percent notes

But: two notes for two years at 12 percent

■ Hours, minutes, and seconds are separated by a colon.

Example: 10:05:02 a.m.

■ Never write "this a.m." to mean "this morning."

■ With *a.m.* or *p.m.*, the word *o'clock* should not be used:

Example: I will meet you at 4 p.m.

Example: I will meet you at four o'clock this afternoon.

■ Ciphers (zeros) after the number of the hour are unnecessary.

■ For exact noon and midnight, it is correct to use the words *noon* or *midnight:*

Example: I will meet you at noon.

Example: The horn blew at midnight.

Dates

■ The day is written in numerals, without *-th, -st -rd,* or *-nd,* unless the day is written before the name of the month.

Incorrect: May 1st, 2011

Correct: May 1, 2011

Correct: On the 2nd of June 2011

Incorrect: in the August 21st and September 3rd editions

Correct: in the August 21 and September 3 editions

■   In legal documents, dates are spelled out.

Example: the twelfth day of May, A.D. Two Thousand and Eight

Time Zones

The names of time zones should be treated as proper nouns and capitalized.

Example: Eastern Time, Central Time, Mountain Time, Pacific Time

Avoid specifying standard time or daylight saving time when writing about time zones. Do not abbreviate time zones.

Titled, Entitled

Entitled should not be used as a synonym for *titled*. *Entitled* means that something is owed. Books are *titled*.

Incorrect: He was reading from a white paper entitled "Avoiding HR Litigation."

Correct: He was reading from a white paper titled "Avoiding HR Litigation."

Titles

Consider the following tips for formatting titles:

- Underlining and italics serve the same purpose. Never do both.

- For titles of standalone works, use underlining or italics. Works that are part of another work are enclosed in quotation marks.

Table 2.30 itemizes what gets quotation marks and what should be italicized or underlined.

Table 2.30 Use of Underlining, Italics, and Quotation Marks in Titles

Type and Formatting	Types of Titles
No quotation marks or underlining/italic	Your own works
Italics or underlined	Books
	Audio CDs
	Names of vehicles of transportation (ships, trains, airplanes, spacecraft)
	Long poems
	Television shows, plays, and movies
Quotation marks	Articles in a newspaper or magazine
	Chapter titles
	Poems
	Short stories
	Song titles

Formatting the Title of a Manuscript

The title page of a manuscript should be formatted as follows:

- The title should be positioned in the center of the page, between the top and bottom margins and left and right margins.

- Use a 12- to 14-point font, such as Times New Roman or Courier.

- Use the bold font.

- Capitalize the title properly.
    - Do not use all caps for titles.
    - Capitalize the first letter of each word, except for short words of less than four letters.

- Add quotation marks, underline, or italics if you use any other work as part of your title.

Tmesis

Tmesis is a literary device that involves splitting a word into two parts and adding another word in the middle with all three parts separated by hyphens.

Example: any-old-how, fan-blooming-tastic, un-bloody-believable

To, At

Do not use either *to* or *at* with *where*.

Incorrect: Where are you at?

Correct: Where are you?

Incorrect: Where did he go to?

Correct: Where did he go?

Tone

Tone is the writer's attitude toward the reader and the subject. Tone is a reflection of the writer and determined by the choice of words, the style, and level of care and detail.

To make sure a business document has the appropriate tone:

- Know the purpose of the document.

- Know the audience and what they need to understand.

- Be confident, courteous, and sincere as you craft your writing.

- Emphasize what's important and avoid getting lost in the details.

- Don't use discriminatory language.

- Stress the benefits.

- Write at the appropriate reading level for your audience.

Topic Sentence

A **topic sentence** is the main sentence in a paragraph that states the main idea of the paragraph. Although it is often the first sentence in a paragraph, if the purpose of the paragraph is to draw a conclusion, the topic sentence is usually the last sentence, stating the conclusion.

Totally

See *Basically, Essentially, Totally.*

Toward, Towards

Toward and *towards* are interchangeable.

- *Toward* is more common in the United States.

- *Towards* is more common in the United Kingdom.

Transitions

As you compound sentences and vary your sentence structures to add variety to your writing, consider using **transitions** between ideas. Transitions help guide a reader from one idea to the next.

You can add transitions between ideas by:

- Using transitional expressions.

- Repeating key words and phrases.

- ■ Using pronoun reference.

- ■ Using parallel forms.

Transitional Expressions

In addition to coordinating conjunctions—*and, but, for, nor, or, so,* and *yet*—you can use conjunctive adverbs and transitional expressions such as *however, moreover,* and *nevertheless* to transition your sentences from one thought to the next.

The key is to avoid using the same transitional elements because the repetition becomes boring.

Table 2.31 contains a list of some conjunctive adverbs that can add spice to your transitions.

Table 2.31 Conjunctive Adverbs

Type of Transition	Conjunctive Adverbs
Addition	again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too
Comparison	also, in the same way, likewise, similarly
Concession	granted, naturally, of course
Contrast	although, and yet, at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet
Emphasis	certainly, indeed, in fact
Example	after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, in short, it is true, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus

(continues)

Table 2.31 *(continued)*

Type of Transition	Conjunctive Adverbs
Summary	all in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize
Time sequence	after a while, afterward, again, also, and then, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when

Repeating Key Words

By repeating a key word or phrase, you can establish its importance in the mind of the reader.

Example: It is spending that got us into this mess. It is spending by consumers that will get us out.

Pronoun Reference

Pronouns can be used to refer the reader to something earlier in the text. A pronoun such as *this* causes the reader to summarize what has been said so far.

Example: There has been an increase in the number of earthquakes in California in the past ten years. This [pronoun summarizing previous sentence] is true because we have geological records that go back almost 150 years, and they [pronoun related to "geological records"] show a clear trend.

Parallelism

Parallel constructions are expressions with similar content and function. Their similarity enables the reader to more easily recognize the content and understand the message.

Articles (*the, a,* and *an*) must be used either only before the first term in a group or before every term in the group.

Example: At the World's Fair we saw all the latest model automobiles, including <u>the</u> new Hondas, Toyotas, and Nissans.

Example: We left on Sunday for vacation with <u>the</u> Wilsons, <u>the</u> Wausons, and <u>the</u> Bruecks.

Correlative expressions (*both, and; not, but; not only, but also; either, or; first, second*) should be followed by the same grammatical construction.

Example: It was not only the blowing wind, but also the freezing temperatures that made travel so treacherous.

Transitive Verb

A **transitive verb** requires both a subject and a direct object.

An **intransitive verb** does not take an object.

Example: He <u>lifted</u> [transitive] the box.

Example: She <u>died</u> [intransitive] last week.

Try and, Come and, Be Sure and

Don't use a word if it is not necessary to convey your meaning.

Incorrect: Try and be here at noon.

Correct: Try to be here at noon.

Incorrect: Come and see me tomorrow.

Correct: Come see me tomorrow.

Incorrect: Be sure and watch out as you cross the street.

Correct: Be sure to watch out as you cross the street.

Type, Enter

For technical documents involving computer-related procedures, use *type* when a user enters information to fill out a form or form field.

Example: Type your employee ID in the User Name field.

Use *enter* to instruct users what kind of data should be typed.

Example: Enter the file name and then click OK.

Typeface, Font

See *Font, Typeface*.

U

Unbiased Language

Most gender problems can be avoided without the use of *he/she, he or she, him or her,* or *him/her* constructions. Plural pronouns such as *they* can be very helpful in this regard.

An occasional *he* or *she* is okay, but after a while using the same pronoun becomes distracting.

When a singular pronoun is necessary, use either *he* or *she* consistently to avoid confusion.

Sexist Language

A variety of words and phrases make demeaning assumptions about gender-related roles. Substitutes should be reasonable and appropriate. Try not to look as though you are avoiding sexist language.

Table 2.32 contains a list of words to avoid and their alternatives.

Table 2.32 Biased Words and Their Alternatives

Instead of …	Use …
actress	actor
anchorman	anchor
businessman	businessperson
chairman	chairperson or chair
coed	student
forefathers	ancestors
foreman	supervisor
freshman	first-year student

(continues)

Table 2.32 *(continued)*

Instead of …	Use …
mailman	mail carrier
male nurse	nurse
man (meaning human being)	person, people
managers and their wives	managers and their spouses
mankind	humanity, people
poetess	poet
policeman	police officer
salesman	sales representative
stewardess	flight attendant
waiter or waitress	server

Uncountable Noun

Nouns with no plural form are called **uncountable nouns** or **mass nouns**.

Example: air, water, furniture, music, art, love, luggage, sugar, electricity, money, currency, information

Uncountable nouns are paired with a singular verb.

Example: This water is very refreshing.

Indefinite articles *a* and *an* are not used with uncountable nouns. *Some, any, a little,* and *much* are used with uncountable nouns.

Example: May I have a little water?

Underlining

Underlining is used the same way italics are used, to designate titles of publications, although italics are preferred.

Underlining is also used to designate hyperlinks in a document such as email addresses or Web addresses.

See *Titles* and *Italics*.

Understatement

An **understatement** is a figure of speech where a lesser expression is used than might be expected, usually for humorous or literary effect.

Example: The lean-to was hardly well-appointed.

Until, By

See *By, Until*.

Upload, Download

See *Download, Upload*.

Uppercase

Uppercase is an adjective meaning capital letters. **Upper case** (two words) is the related noun. Never use all uppercase letters for emphasis in emails.

For computer-related procedures, keyboard key names should be in upper case.

Example: Press the ENTER key.

Use upper case for acronyms.

Example: NASA, FIFO

See *Capitalization*.

URL

URL is an acronym for uniform resource locator. A URL is an address for a Web site on the Internet or an intranet.

When writing about URLs in technical documents, use the indefinite article *a* instead of *an*.

Example: Each Web site has a URL.

A URL includes an Internet protocol name, a domain name, and other information such as file names, directories, and port names. Internet protocol begins with http:// and each of the elements after the Internet protocol is separated by a slash.

Example: http://www.videologies.com

Most of the time, a URL can be typed in all lower case.

When including a Web address in a business document, it is not necessary to include the Internet protocol (http://).

Example: www.videologies.com

When referring to an entire Web site, you can drop the *www* at the beginning of the address.

Example: I do a lot of shopping on Amazon.com.

To include a URL as a hyperlink in a document, set the URL off on its own line of text.

U.S.

U.S. is an abbreviation for United States. It is appropriate to use U.S. as an abbreviation when it acts as an adjective.

Example: They expect to be paid in U.S. dollars.

Do not use the *U.S.* abbreviation when it acts as a noun.

Example: They wanted to visit the United States.

Used to

Used to is a phrase that refers to something that happened often in the past but no longer occurs.

Example: I used to ride my bike every day.

Used to also refers to something that was true but is no longer.

Example: I used to live in Texas.

Use to without the *d* is incorrect for this purpose.

Utterance

An **utterance** is one complete unit of spoken language. It can be something as short as one word, such as *oh,* to a complete sentence from one speaker in a dialogue.

V

Vain, Vane, Vein

Vain means to be conceited.

Example: He's so vain he doesn't know when he's being insulted.

A *vane* is a blade that is moved by gas or liquid.

Example: a weather vane

A *vein* carries blood through the body or is a long slender deposit of a mineral.

Example: a vein of gold

Verbal Phrase

Verbals are words that seem to mean an action or a state of being but do not function as verbs. They are sometimes called **nonfinite verbs**. Verbals are frequently used with other words in what is called a **verbal phrase**.

Example: Frequenting the shady bars in that neighborhood [verbal phrase] is not a good idea.

Verb Complement

See *Complements*.

Verb Forms

Verbs have four basic inflections, or endings:

- Present tense—Something is happening now.

- Past tense—Something happened in the past.

Example: I thought.

- Present participle—Something is happening now.

Example: I am thinking.

- Past participle—Something happened in the past (the verb is combined with an auxiliary).

Example: I have thought.

Verb Group

A **verb group** consists of an auxiliary or modal verb along with a verb.

Example: He <u>wouldn't say</u> [modal + verb] that.

Example: We <u>haven't told</u> [auxiliary + verb] her.

Verbiage

Verbiage is sometimes used to describe wording or text in a document; however, it is actually an insulting term that means overly wordy.

Verb Mood

Verbs can be used in three moods:

- **Indicative mood**—used for factual statements
  - Present indicative

    Example: He eats at school.

  - Past indicative

    Example: He ate at school.

  - Future indicative

    Example: He will eat at school.

- **Imperative mood**—used for requests or commands

  Example: Notice how nice the lake looks.

  Example: Email him tomorrow.

- **Subjunctive mood**—used to express doubts, wishes, or a request

  Example: He acts as if he doesn't know what he's doing.

  - Auxiliary verbs *could, would,* and *should* can express the subjunctive mood.

    Example: If Carl were to move to Dallas, he would be happy.

Verbose Expressions

Beware of words that do not mean exactly what you want to say and of phrases that are careless, vague, or wordy.

Table 2.33 contains a list of examples of such pitfalls.

Table 2.33 Verbose Expressions

Verbose Expressions	What You Really Mean
I beg to be advised	Please tell me
Thank you kindly	Thank you
I feel that you are able to appreciate	You can appreciate
Which you will remember is in connection with	Regarding
I am not at present in a position to	I am unable to
I would, therefore, ask that you kindly write	Please write
We would appreciate it if you would investigate the matter and inform us and report	Please check the matter
You have my permission to	You may
I am in receipt of the complaint from John Smith	John Smith complains
You have not, I believe, favored us with a reply	You have not replied
I acknowledge receipt of your letter	I received your letter

Verbs

Verbs describe an action or an idea of being in a sentence.

Example: I <u>am</u> [idea of being] an office worker.

Example: The manager <u>worked</u> [action] hard.

There are four ways to classify verbs:

- **Transitive**—requiring an object

Example: Will you lay the report on my desk?

■ **Intransitive**—not requiring an object

Example: The project manager is sitting.

■ **Finite**—standing alone as the main verb in a sentence

Example: The layouts destroyed morale.

■ **Nonfinite**—not standing alone

Example: the devastated employees

Verb Tense

The form of a verb helps determine its tense, which tells you when some-thing is happening.

■ Happening now

Example: They're serving dinner.

■ Going to happen

Example: It will be ready in the morning.

■ Has already happened

Example: The bus just left.

See *Verb Forms* and *Tense*.

Versus, vs.

The abbreviation for *versus* is *vs.* As an abbreviation *vs.* is always lowercase. Use the abbreviation in headings and titles; otherwise spell out *versus*.

Vertical Lists

See *Lists*.

Visually Impaired, Blind

A person with vision problems can be visually impaired; however, a person who can't see is blind.

Many people think using *visually impaired* is better than saying *blind,* but actually it is more polite to say *blind* when a person can't see.

Voice

Voice is a relationship between the action in a sentence and the participants.

When the subject of a sentence is the agent, we use the **active voice**.

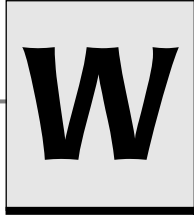When the subject of a sentence undergoes the action, we use the **passive voice**.

See *Active Voice* and *Passive Voice*.

Voice Mail

Voice mail is two words and should not be abbreviated as *v-mail* or *vmail*.

Vowels

All English words have at least one **vowel**. Vowels include *a, e, i, o, u,* and *y. Y* can act as a consonant when it begins a word.

W

Wait On

When *wait* refers to time, *on* is not needed.

> **Incorrect:** Please do not wait on me if I am not at the station when you arrive.

> **Correct:** Please do not wait for me if I am not at the station when you arrive.

When the word refers to the actions of a waiter or waitress, *wait on* is acceptable.

> **Correct:** The headwaiter assigned the red-haired woman to wait on me.

Wander, Wonder

Wander means to walk around with no destination in mind.

Wonder, as a noun, means astonishment or curiosity. As a verb, it means to feel curiosity or doubt.

Web

Web is short for World Wide Web.

Spell out *World Wide Web* in your first usage and then use *Web* thereafter. When referring to the Internet, *Web* is always capitalized.

> **Example:** Web page, Web browser, Web address, Web site

Although the abbreviation for World Wide Web is *www, Web* is the preferred abbreviation in business writing.

Weblog

See *Blog, Weblog*.

Web Pages, Web Site

A *Web page* is a individual page on a *Web site,* which is a collection of text and graphics at a particular IP address on the World Wide Web.

Capitalize *Web* in both Web page and Web site.

Weights and Measures

Consider the following guidelines when writing about weights and measurements:

■ Abbreviations are used without capitalization.

Example: 6 lb 3 oz, 6 pounds 3 ounces

Example: 192 lb, 192 pounds

■ In a compound adjective showing a weight or a measure, the numeral is hyphenated with a singular noun.

Example: a speed of 600 miles an hour, a 600-mile-an-hour speed

---

Example: a workweek of 40 hours, a 40-hour workweek

Well, Good

See *Good, Well*.

Went, Gone

See *Gone, Went*.

When, Whether

See *If, When, Whether.*

Where

Whether used as an adverb or a conjunction, *where* denotes position or place.

Where should never be used as a substitute for *that* when introducing a clause.

Incorrect: Did you read in the paper where our mayor was honored at a banquet?

Correct: Did you read in the paper that our mayor was honored at a banquet?

Whether or Not

When *whether* is used to introduce a statement involving multiple alternatives, do not use *not*.

Incorrect: She didn't know whether or not to go first to the drugstore or to the cleaners.

Correct: She didn't know whether to go first to the drugstore or to the cleaners.

Which

When used to introduce a clause, *which* must refer to a specific noun or pronoun and not to a whole situation.

Incorrect: He did not arrive in time for the meeting, which caused the president embarrassment.

Correct: His failure to arrive in time for the meeting caused the president embarrassment.

Correct: His failure to arrive, which caused the president embarrassment, was the reason for his dismissal.

Who's, Whose

Who's is a contraction for *who is*.

Example: Who's working the night shift this week?

Whose is the possessive form of *who*.

Example: Whose work clothes are those on the floor?

Who, Which

Who is used to refer to people.

Which refers to objects.

Correct: She is the woman who smiled at him.

Correct: She is the kind of person whom everyone likes.

Correct: I read the book on bridges, which I found fascinating.

Who, Whom

When determining whether to use *who* or *whom* in a sentence, rephrase the sentence using *he* and *him*.

Example: Who/whom is responsible? He is responsible. Who is responsible?

Example: Give the box to who/whom? Give the box to him. Give the box to whom?

Will, Shall

See S*hall, Will.*

Within, Inside of

See *Inside of, Within.*

Woman, Female

See *Female, Woman.*

Wonder, Wander

See *Wander, Wonder.*

Word Classes

The major **word classes** include the following:

- Verbs
- Nouns
- Determiners
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Prepositions
- Conjunctions

Words or Figures
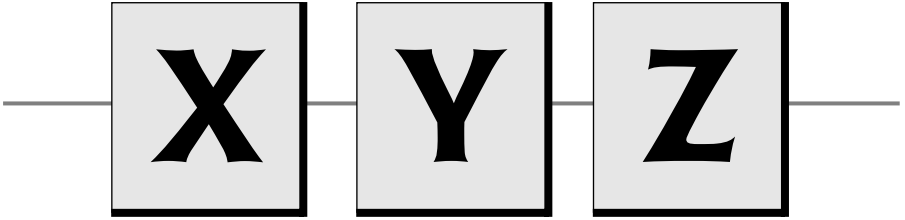
See *Numbers or Words.*

Wordy Expressions

See *Verbose Expressions.*

Would of

See *Might of, Should of, Would of, Could of.*

Would, Should

See *Should, Would.*

X Y Z

Xmas, Christmas

Xmas is an abbreviation for *Christmas* that should not be used in business writing.

Yes/No Questions

A **yes/no question** is one that can be answered with a yes or no response. These questions normally begin with an auxiliary or modal verb.

Example: Do you want to see it?

Example: Did you find it?

Example: Will they like it?

Zero Article

Zero article describes a situation where a noun is used without an article like *the*, *a,* or *an*.

Example: Money is power.

Example: We are studying French.

Zero Conditional

Zero conditional describes a situation that is always true when all the conditions are met. It is formed by adding *if* + present simple tense + present simple tense.

Example: If it rains, the roads get wet.

Zeugma

Zeugma is a figure of speech describing a word that is used to link two words or phrases; however, the word would normally be grammatically correct when used with only one of the words or phrases.

Example: She <u>lost</u> her purse and her temper.

Zip Code

Zip Code is always capitalized.