

# Fix It!™ Grammar

## Glossary



Listen. Speak. Read. Write. Think!

# **Fix It!** Grammar

Glossary

FOURTH EDITION



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# Parts of Speech

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Every word belongs to a word group—a **part of speech**. There are eight parts of speech. Many words can be used as different parts of speech. However, a word will only perform one part of speech at a time. (*Light* is a verb in *The fireworks light the sky*. *Light* is a noun in *We need more light*. *Light* is an adjective in *It is a light load*.)

One must look at how words are used in a sentence to determine their parts of speech. To see how these parts of speech are used as IEW dress-ups and sentence openers, see the Stylistic Techniques section beginning on page G-37.

## Noun

A **noun** names a person, place, thing, or idea.

To determine if a word is a noun, ask if an article adjective (a, an, the) comes before it or if it is countable.

A **common noun** names a general person, place, or thing. It is not capitalized.

A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, or thing. It is capitalized.

The *king* is a common noun, but *King James* is a proper noun.

A *beagle* is a common noun, but the name of my pet beagle *Benji* is a proper noun.

A **compound noun** is two or more words combined to form a single noun. They can be written three different ways. To spell compound words correctly, consult a dictionary.

separate words	<i>fairy tale; Robin Hood; ice cream</i>
hyphenated words	<i>merry-go-round; son-in-law; seventy-two</i>
one word	<i>grandmother; railroad; moonlight</i>

Noun Tests:  
the \_\_\_\_\_  
two \_\_\_\_\_

# Pronoun

A **pronoun** replaces a noun in order to avoid repetition. The noun the pronoun replaces is called an antecedent.

A **personal pronoun** refers back to an antecedent recently mentioned and takes the place of that noun. The pronoun should agree with its antecedent in number, person, and case.

3 cases		Subjective function as	Objective function as	Possessive function as	
		subject subject complement	object of a preposition direct object indirect object	adjective	pronoun
2 numbers	3 persons				
singular	1st	I	me	my	mine
	2nd	you	you	your	yours
	3rd	he, she, it	him, her, it	his, her, its	his, hers, its
plural	1st	we	us	our	ours
	2nd	you	you	your	yours
	3rd	they	them	their	theirs

Number means one (singular) or more than one (plural).

Person means who is speaking (1st), spoken to (2nd), or spoken about (3rd).

Case refers to the way a pronoun functions in a sentence.

Both a **reflexive pronoun** (used in the objective case) and an **intensive pronoun** (used as an appositive) end in *-self* or *-selves* and refer back to a noun or pronoun in the same sentence.

Dorinda fancied *herself* quite stylish. Dorinda *herself* played as others worked.

A **relative pronoun** (*who, which, that*) begins a dependent clause. Use *who* for people and *which* or *that* for things. See page G-21.

Robin lived in Sherwood Forest, *which* belonged to the king.

Robin knew the other men *who* lived in the forest.

Robin battled with Little John, *whom* he had met on the log.

Robin knew the families *whose* lands had been stolen.

An **interrogative pronoun** is used to ask a question. The most common include *what, whatever, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whose*.

*Who* owns that house? *Whatever* do you mean? *Whose* coat is this?

A **demonstrative pronoun** (*this, that, these, those*) points to a particular person or thing.

*This* is my mother and *that* is our house. *These* are mine. *Those* are yours.

An **indefinite pronoun** is not definite. It does not refer to any particular person or thing.

*Everyone* will attend. *All* of the cookies are gone. *Most* of the cake is gone.

Forms of *who* include *whom* and *whose*.

*who* subjective case  
*whom* objective case  
*whose* possessive case

Not all question words are pronouns. Words like *why* and *how* are adverbs.

When a word on the demonstrative or indefinite list is placed before a noun, it functions as an adjective, not a pronoun.

*Both* cookies are gone.  
I live in *that* house.

Singular and Plural	Plural	Singular			
all	both		each	much	one
any	few	another	either	neither	other
more	many	anybody	everybody	nobody	somebody
most	others	anyone	everyone	no one	someone
none	own	anything	everything	nothing	something
some	several	anywhere	everywhere	nowhere	somewhere

## Noun and Pronoun Functions

Both nouns and pronouns perform many jobs or functions in a sentence.

A **subject** performs a verb action. It tells who or what the clause is about.

The soldier marched in formation.  
Who marched? *soldier* (subject)

A **subject complement** follows a linking verb and renames the subject (also called a predicate noun) or describes the subject (also called a predicate adjective).

The soldier is a *woman*. The king is *he*. The castle is *theirs*.

The **object of a preposition** is the last word in a prepositional phrase. See page G-18.

A **direct object** follows an action verb and answers the question *what* or *whom*.

The soldier built a fire.  
Built what? *a fire* (direct object)

The soldier treated him kindly.  
Treated whom? *him* (direct object)

An **indirect object** appears only when there is a direct object. Indirect objects come between the verb and direct object and tell who or what received the direct object.

The dwarf gave the soldier a purse.  
Gave what? *purse* (direct object). Who received it? *soldier* (indirect object)

The woman knitted him a scarf.  
Knitted what? *scarf* (direct object). Who received it? *him* (indirect object)

To tell the difference between an indirect object and a direct object, revise the sentence and insert *to* or *for* in front of the indirect object.

The dwarf gave a purse *to* the soldier.

The woman knitted a scarf *for* him.

A **possessive case pronoun** that functions as an adjective comes before a noun, whereas a possessive case pronoun that functions as a pronoun is used alone.

That is *my* house.

That is *mine*.

A **noun of direct address** (NDA) is a noun used to refer to someone directly. It appears in dialogue and names the person spoken to.

“Timmy, after dinner we can read books,” Johnny said.

An **appositive** is a noun that renames the noun that comes before it.



Place commas around an appositive if it is nonessential to the meaning of the sentence.

Robin Hood, *the archer*, led his men through the forest.  
(nonessential, commas)



Do not place commas around an appositive if it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. See page G-26.

The archer *Robin Hood* led his men through the forest.  
(essential, no commas) The appositive is essential because it defines which archer led his men.

Function is different from part of speech.

A noun or pronoun can perform only one function in a sentence.

When the sentence is a command, the subject, *you*, is implied. See imperative mood, page G-11.

The appositive is an invisible *who/which* clause. See page G-39.



## Preposition

A **preposition** starts a phrase that shows the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word in the sentence.

A preposition usually shows a relationship dealing with space or time.

The squirrel sat *on the branch* (space) *in the morning* (time).

A word functions as a preposition when it is part of a prepositional phrase. See page G-18.

A prepositional phrase always begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun. The phrase may have adjectives in between, but never a verb.

The noun or pronoun that ends the prepositional phrase is called the object of the preposition. When the object of the preposition is a pronoun, it will be one of the objective case pronouns: *me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them*.

Some words on the preposition list may function as another part of speech.

When a word that looks like a preposition follows a verb but does not have a noun afterward, it is not functioning as a preposition but as an adverb.

The mouse fell down. (fell where? *down*)

*Down* is not followed by a noun.

This is an adverb, not a prepositional phrase.

Timmy wore his vest inside (wore vest where? *inside*)

*Inside* is not followed by a noun.

This is an adverb, not a prepositional phrase.

When a word that looks like a preposition is followed by a subject and a verb, it is a not functioning as a preposition but as a subordinating conjunction (www word).

*As Johnny gave orders*, the mice listened

*As Johnny gave orders* contains a subject (Johnny) and a verb (gave).

This is a clause, not a prepositional phrase.

The mice hid *after the cat arrived*.

*After the cat arrived* contains a subject (cat) and a verb (arrived).

This is a clause, not a prepositional phrase.

This is not an exhaustive list. When in doubt, consult a dictionary.

### Prepositions List

aboard	around	between	in	opposite	toward
about	as	beyond	inside	out	under
above	at	by	instead of	outside	underneath
according to	because of	concerning	into	over	unlike
across	before	despite	like	past	until
after	behind	down	minus	regarding	unto
against	below	during	near	since	up, upon
along	beneath	except	of	through	with
amid	beside	for	off	throughout	within
among	besides	from	on, onto	to	without

### PATTERN

**preposition + noun**  
(no verb)

If it is something a squirrel can do with a tree, it is probably a prepositional phrase.

A squirrel  
climbs *up the tree*,  
sits *in the tree*,  
runs *around the tree*.

# Verb

A **verb** shows action, links the subject to another word, or helps another verb.

To determine if a word is a verb, use the verb test.

An **action verb** shows action or ownership.

She *chopped* vegetables.

The chef *prepared* lunch.

Dorinda *has* a beauty mark.

They *own* a lovely palace.

A **linking verb** links the subject to a noun or an adjective. When the subject complement is a noun, the noun after the linking verb renames the subject. When the subject complement is an adjective, the adjective after the linking verb describes the subject.

Robin Hood *was* (linking verb) an outlaw (subject complement, noun).  
Outlaw is another name for Robin Hood.

The soup *smelled* (linking verb) delicious (subject complement, adjective).  
Delicious describes soup.

The soup *is* (linking verb) salty (subject complement, adjective).  
Salty describes soup.

A **helping verb** helps an action verb or a linking verb. It is paired with the main verb (action or linking) to indicate tense, voice, and mood.

The chef *would* prepare supper.  
Would helps prepare.

The soup *had* tasted strange.  
Had helps tasted.

Verb Test:

I \_\_\_\_.

It \_\_\_\_.

Some verbs function as either action or linking verbs.

He *smells* (action) gas.

The gas *smells* (linking) bad.

If you can substitute *is* for the verb, it is probably functioning as a linking verb.

## Linking Verbs List

am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been (be verbs)

seem, become, appear, grow, remain

taste, sound, smell, feel, look (verbs dealing with the senses)

*Be* verbs dominate our language and perform important functions as both linking and helping verbs.

## Helping Verbs List

am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been (be verbs)

have, has, had, do, does, did, may, might, must

can, will, shall, could, would, should

Students should memorize the *be* verbs: am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been.

## Verbal

A **verbal** is a word formed from a verb that is usually not functioning as a verb.

A verbal often functions as a noun, adjective, or adverb.

An **infinitive** is formed by placing *to* in front of the simple present form of a verb.

An infinitive functions as an adjective, adverb, or noun, but never as a verb.

Dorinda has some things *to learn*.

Frederick is eager *to hear* a story.

A **participle** is formed by adding the suffix *-ing* or *-ed* to the simple present form of a verb.

splash + ing = splashing; splash + ed = splashed

A participle functions as a verb if it has a helping verb.

He *was splashing*, which frightened the fish.

For years, she *had longed* to visit the city.

If a participle does not have a helping verb, it functions as an adjective. A participle-adjective may appear directly before a noun or after a linking verb.

Robin Hood was known for his *hunting* skills.

It was a *botched* case. The case was *botched*.

A participle may also form a participial phrase that describes a noun in the sentence.

*Springing to his feet*, Robin Hood confronted the challenger.

Springing to his feet describes Robin Hood, the subject after the comma.

Robin Hood whistled merrily, *thinking of Maid Marian*.

Thinking of Maid Marian describes Robin Hood, the subject of the sentence.

A **gerund** is formed by adding the suffix *-ing* to the simple present form of a verb.

splash + ing = splashing

A gerund functions as a noun, never as a verb.

His *splashing* frightened the fish.

Splashing is the subject of the sentence and therefore a noun.

The fish were frightened by his *splashing*.

Splashing is the object of the preposition *by* and therefore a noun.

To + verb and verbs ending in *-ing* should not be marked as strong verbs.

For clarity in meaning, avoid splitting infinitives when possible.

To split an infinitive is to insert one or more adverbs between *to* and the verb, as in *to foolishly insert*.

Some words do not form the past participle by adding *-ed*. There are many irregular verb forms.

eat/eaten  
not eaten

creep/crept  
not crept

draw/drew  
not drew

If in doubt, consult a dictionary.

## Tense

Verb tense indicates when an action occurs. There are six tenses in English: simple past, simple present, simple future, past perfect, present perfect, and future perfect.

The **simple tense** is simply formed by using different forms of the verb.

I *biked*. I *bike*. I *will bike*.

He *ran*. He *runs*. He *will run*.

The **perfect tense** is formed by adding a form of *have* to the past participle verb form.

I *had biked*. I *have biked*. I *will have biked*.

He *had run*. He *has run*. He *will have run*.

Most writing occurs in the **past tense**, either simple or perfect. When telling about two events that occurred in the past, the more recent event is written in the simple past tense, and the earlier event is written in the past perfect tense.

The soldiers *cried* (past tense) because they *had lost* (past perfect) their gifts.

Simple past is commonly called *past*; simple present, *present*; and simple future, *future*.

Forms of *have* include *have*, *has*, and *had*.

Use *had* + the past participle of a verb to form the past perfect.

## Voice

Verb voice indicates if the subject is doing or receiving the action. There are two voices in English: active and passive.

In **active voice**, the subject of the sentence is doing the verb action. The active voice creates a strong image and feeling because it highlights the doer of the action. Most sentences should be written in active voice.

*Will climbed the tree.*

The subject (Will) is doing the verb (climbed).

In **passive voice**, the subject receives the action of the verb. The subject is not doing any action. The verb is always in the form of a verb phrase (two or more words) that contains a *be* verb and a past participle. Because the passive voice is often wordy and dull, avoid overusing the passive voice.

*The tree was climbed by Will. The tree was climbed.*

In both sentences the subject (the tree) is not doing the verb action (was climbed). Someone or something else is doing the verb action. In the first sentence who is doing the verb is specified (Will). In the second sentence it is implied.

Action verbs, not linking verbs, can be passive or active.

To create a strong image and feeling, write sentences where the subject actively does the verb action.

*Sam kicked the ball is better than  
The ball was kicked by Sam.*



### Advanced

**PATTERN** subject (person/thing being acted on) + **be verb** + **past participle** + **by someone or something** (either in the sentence or implied). The passive sentence must have all four elements.

The tree (thing being acted on) was (be verb) climbed (past participle) by Will (by someone).

The castle (the thing being acted on) would be (be verb) demolished (past participle) by the soldiers (by someone).

Understanding passive voice helps distinguish if an -ed word is operating as a verb or an adjective.

The sandwich (the thing being acted on) was (be verb) devoured (past participle).

Someone must have devoured the sandwich, so the “by someone” is implied.

Since this sentence follows the passive voice pattern, *devoured* is a verb.

Molly (subject) was (be verb) famished (-ed word).

Since *famished* is a state of being, not something being done to Molly, there is no implied “by someone” phrase. Thus, *famished* is an adjective that follows a linking verb (was), describing Molly.

## Mood

Verb mood indicates how an action is expressed, telling if it is a fact, opinion, command, or suggestion. There are three moods in English: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.

The **indicative mood** makes statements or asks questions.

I will swim. Will you swim with me?

The **imperative mood** gives a command or makes a request. The subject of an imperative sentence is always *you*.

Swim. Swim to the other side of the pond.

The **subjunctive mood** expresses contrary-to-fact conditions with *wish* or *if* statements in the third person. It is used infrequently.

If Sam were concerned, he would take swimming lessons.

Sam is not concerned, so the subjunctive *Sam were* is correct.

Sam's mother wishes that he were a stronger swimmer.

Sam is not a stronger swimmer, so the subjunctive *he were* is correct.

## Conjunction

A conjunction connects words, phrases, or clauses.

A **coordinating conjunction** connects the same type of words, phrases, or clauses. The items the coordinating conjunction connects must be grammatically the same: two or more nouns, two or more present participles, two or more dependent clauses, two or more main clauses, and so forth.

There are seven coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*.



Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects three or more items in a series.

**PATTERN a, b, and c**

He *ran* to the window, *opened* it, and *jumped* out.

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects two main clauses (a compound sentence).

**PATTERN MC, cc MC**

The *cook yelled*, and the *mouse ran*.



Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects two items in a series unless they are main clauses.

**PATTERN a and b**

The cook saw the *vegetables* (no comma) but not the *mouse*.

Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects two verbs (a compound verb) with the same subject.

**PATTERN MC cc 2nd verb**

The cook *yelled* (no comma) and *ran*.

Starting sentences with a coordinating conjunction is discouraged in formal writing on the basis that a coordinating conjunction connects things of equal grammatical construction within a sentence.

Faulty parallelism occurs when a coordinating conjunction does not connect things of equal grammatical construction. This means that the items in a series are not parallel.

He *ran* to the window, *opened* it, and *jumping* out.

*Ran, opened, and jumping* are not the same verb form. To correct, change *jumping* to *jumped*: He *ran, opened, and jumped*.

Memorize the cc's using the acronym FANBOYS:

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

In academic papers students should avoid beginning a sentence with a cc.

In fictional papers dialogue can mimic real speech patterns. Thoughts often begin with *and* or *but*.

A **subordinating conjunction** (also called a **www word**) usually connects an adverb clause to a main clause. The adverb clause is a dependent clause, which cannot stand alone as a sentence. It begins with a **www** word and contains a subject and a verb.

There are many subordinating conjunctions. The most common are taught using the acronym **www.asia.b**: when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because. Other words function as subordinating conjunctions: after, before, until, unless, whenever, whereas, than.



Use a comma after an adverb clause that comes before a main clause.

**PATTERN AC, MC**

*When it rained,* Timmy stayed indoors.



Do not use a comma before an adverb clause.

**PATTERN MC AC**

Timmy stayed indoors (no comma) *when it rained*.

A word functions as a subordinating conjunction only when it is followed by a subject and verb. This is why recognizing the pattern **www word + subject + verb** is important. If a verb is not present, the group of words is likely a prepositional phrase and not a clause. See pages G-18 and G-21.

A **conjunctive adverb** connects ideas or provides a transition.

Common conjunctive adverbs are *however, therefore, then, moreover, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus, furthermore, instead, otherwise*.



Place commas around a conjunctive adverb if it interrupts the flow of the sentence. The exception is one-syllable conjunctive adverbs like *then*.

*Moreover,* Robin Hood had many followers.

Robin Hood was a talented archer and, *moreover*, a good leader.

*Then* (no comma) he took an arrow from his quiver.

If a conjunctive adverb is used to connect two main clauses that express similar ideas, place a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb and a comma after.

**PATTERN MC; ca, MC.**

The outlaws lived in the forest; *however*, the forest belonged to the king.

#### PATTERN

**www word +  
subject + verb**

Memorize the most common **www** words using the acronym **www.asia.b**: when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because.

When you add a conjunctive adverb to a main clause, it is still a main clause, which is not the case with subordinating conjunctions or relative pronouns.

## Adjective

An **adjective** describes a noun or pronoun. An adjective tells which one, what kind, how many, or whose.

An adjective comes before the noun it describes or follows a linking verb and describes the subject. See page G-9.

The scared mice jumped from the first basket and ran under the cook's feet.  
What kind of mice? *scared* Which basket? *first* Whose feet? *cook's*

The mice appeared *scared*.  
*Scared* follows *appeared* (linking verb) and describes *mice* (subject).

An **article adjective** signals a noun is coming. The article adjectives are *a*, *an*, *the*. Sometimes adjectives come between the article and its noun.

*The* tall stranger entered *the* room.

*The* boy appeared to be *a* reluctant, timid soldier.

A **comparative adjective** is formed by adding the adverb *more* or the ending *-er* to an adjective. A comparative adjective compares two nouns.

The rose was *more* beautiful than the daisy.

The boy stood *taller* than his mother.

A **superlative adjective** is formed by adding the adverb *most* or the ending *-est* to an adjective. A superlative adjective compares three or more nouns.

This is the *most* interesting book I have read.

The Little Mermaid was the *youngest* in her family.

Most one-syllable adjectives form the comparative and superlative by adding the suffix *-er* or *-est*. Three or more syllable adjectives form the comparative with *more* and the superlative with *most*. Two-syllable adjectives are formed both ways. If in doubt, consult a dictionary.

Use a comma to separate **coordinate adjectives**. Adjectives are coordinate if each adjective independently describes the noun that follows. The order is not important.

The woman had a thin face with a pointed, protruding nose.  
It sounds right to say both *protruding, pointed nose* and *pointed and protruding nose*. The adjectives are coordinate and the comma is necessary.



Do not use a comma to separate **cumulative adjectives**. Adjectives are cumulative if the first adjective describes the second adjective and the noun that follows. Cumulative adjectives follow this specific order: quantity, opinion, size, age, shape, color, origin, material, purpose.

Robin saw fifteen foresters seated beneath a huge oak tree.  
It does not sound right to say *oak huge tree* or *huge and oak tree*.  
The adjectives are cumulative and should not have a comma.

A **possessive adjective** is a noun functioning as an adjective in order to show ownership. See page G-28.

The vest belonged to Timmy (noun).

Timmy's (possessive adjective) vest had several pockets.

Adjective Test:  
the \_\_\_\_\_ pen

Which pen?  
the *first* pen  
*that* pen

What kind of pen?  
a *shiny* pen  
the *green* pen

How many pens?  
*twenty* pens  
*few* pens

Whose pen?  
the *teacher's* pen  
*my* pen

Some words form irregular comparatives and superlatives. The most common of these are *good, better, best* and *bad, worse, worst*.

Only coordinate adjectives need to be separated with a comma.

Adjectives are coordinate if you can reverse their order or add *and* between them.

Adjectives are cumulative if they must be arranged in a specific order.



## Adverb

An **adverb** modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. An adverb tells how, when, where, why, or to what extent.

I dropped the pen there beside the book.

Dropped where? *there*

He seemed genuinely happy when he indicated that he would visit us later.

How happy? *genuinely* Visit when? *later*

An **-ly adverb** is an adverb that ends in -ly. Not all words that end in -ly are adverbs. Impostor -ly adverbs are adjectives like *chilly*, *ghastly*, *ugly*, and *friendly*. If the word ending in -ly describes a noun, it is an adjective and not an adverb.

Inadvertently Frederick touched Dorinda's omelet with his hind leg.

Touched how? *inadvertently* Inadvertently is an adverb.

Dorinda accidentally hurled him across the room.

Hurled how? *accidentally* Accidentally is an adverb.

Frederick uttered a ghastly sound when his leg broke.

What kind of sound? *ghastly* Ghastly is not an -ly adverb. It is an adjective because it describes the noun *sound*.

An **interrogative adverb** is an adverb used to begin a question. The interrogative adverbs are *how*, *when*, *where*, and *why*.

*Why* do bees sting, Baloo?

*How* will you collect the honey?

A **comparative** or **superlative** adverb is usually formed by adding the adverbs *more* or *most* in front of the adverb. If the adverb is short, the suffix *-er* or *-est* is used, as in *faster* or *fastest*. If in doubt, consult a dictionary.

Do not place *more* or *most* before the word with *-er* or *-est* after. Not *more faster* but *faster*.

## Interjection

An **interjection** expresses an emotion.

When an interjection expresses a strong emotion, use an exclamation mark. The next word begins with a capital letter.

*Help!* My golden ball has vanished.

When an interjection does not express a strong emotion, use a comma.

*Oh*, I see it now.





# The Sentence

---

Sentences are essential to writing. As the building blocks of sentences, clauses and phrases are the most important structural units of language. For the reader, the ability to recognize clauses and phrases results in greater comprehension. For the writer, the ability to organize clauses and phrases results in clearer communication. The writer must know enough about each to punctuate properly. This section defines these terms and explains the related commas rules.

## Sentence

A sentence contains a subject and a verb and expresses one complete thought.

Every sentence must have a main clause.

A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with an end mark. It contains at least one subject-verb pair, which is called a main clause. A **subject** is the noun or pronoun that tells who or what the clause is about. A **verb** tells what the subject is doing. Additional words, phrases, and clauses may be added.

A **run-on** occurs when a sentence has two main clauses that are not connected properly. There are two types of run-ons, which are always wrong.

A **fused sentence** is two main clauses placed in one sentence without any punctuation between them. **MC MC.**

Quinn glanced up the door slammed shut.

A **comma splice** is two main clauses placed in one sentence with only a comma between them. **MC, MC.**

Quinn glanced up, the door slammed shut.

There are four main ways to fix a run-on.

1. Period: Quinn glanced up. The door slammed shut. **PATTERN MC. MC.**
2. Comma + cc: Quinn glanced up, and the door slammed shut. **PATTERN MC, cc MC.**
3. Adverb clause: Start one of the clauses with one of the *www* words.  
As Quinn glanced up, the door slammed shut. **PATTERN AC, MC.**  
Quinn glanced up as the door slammed shut. **PATTERN MC AC.**
4. Semicolon: Quinn glanced up; the door slammed shut. **PATTERN MC; MC.**

Of these options for this example, the adverb clause is the best solution because *as* explains how the two clauses are related.

A **fragment** occurs when a sentence does not contain a main clause. The group of words may contain a phrase and/or a dependent clause, but it is only part of a sentence.

Fragments that do not leave the reader hanging and that fit the flow of the paragraph are dramatic and effective. *Fix It!* stories permit such fragments, especially in dialogue.

Timmy saw his dear friend. (sentence)  
Greeting him kindly. (unacceptable fragment)  
"Hello, Johnny!" (acceptable fragment)

A period is usually the easiest solution for run-ons.

A semicolon is only used when both main clauses are closely related and usually parallel in construction.

# Phrase

A phrase is a group of related words that contains either a noun or a verb, never both.

A **prepositional phrase** begins with a preposition and ends with a noun. There might be other words between the preposition and the noun, but there is never a verb in a prepositional phrase.

To identify a prepositional phrase, find a word that appears to be a preposition and ask *what?* Answer with a noun, never a verb. See page G-8.

Through the glimmering twilight beamed the evening star in all its beauty.  
Find a preposition. *through* through what? *through the glimmering twilight*  
Find a preposition. *in* in what? *in all its beauty*

## PATTERN

**preposition + noun  
(no verb)**

“ If a prepositional opener has five words or more, follow it with a comma.

*Under the table* (no comma) the tiny mouse hid.

*Under the heavy wooden table,* the tiny mouse hid.

If two or more prepositional phrases open a sentence, follow the last phrase with a comma.

*Under the heavy wooden table in the kitchen,* the tiny mouse hid.

If a prepositional opener functions as a transition, follow it with a comma.

*Of course,* the cook was afraid of mice.



If a prepositional opener is followed by a main clause that has the verb before the subject, do not use a comma.

*Under the heavy wooden table* hid a tiny mouse.

Do not put a comma in front of a prepositional phrase unless the phrase is a transition.

The mouse hid (no comma) *under a table in the kitchen*.

The cook was, *of course,* afraid of mice.

Prepositional phrases that function as transitions require commas.

in fact  
in addition  
by the way  
by contrast  
for example  
for instance  
of course  
on the other hand

Recognizing the basic clause and phrase structure of a sentence will allow students to punctuate their sentences properly. Removing prepositional phrases helps reveal the underlying structure of the sentence.

When a prepositional phrase is misplaced, the meaning is distorted, often humorously. Revise the sentence by moving the prepositional phrase.

The mouse hid under a table with the long gray tail.

The mouse, not the table, has the long gray tail.

The mouse with the long gray tail hid under a table.



## Advanced

When a preposition ends a sentence, it is not wrong. This is a carryover from Latin and not a true rule in English. Andrew Pudewa quips that Winston Churchill gave the definitive answer to this problem when he remarked, “That is a rule up with which I will not put!” If the sentence is more awkward to revise with the preposition placed earlier, it is better to have it at the end.

I have only a staff to meet you with.

The alternative is this stilted construction: I have only a staff with which to meet you.

A **verb phrase** is one main verb (action or linking) and one or more helping verbs. The helping verb indicates the tense, mood, and voice. Sometimes the helping verb(s) and the main verb are separated by other words. See page G-9.

The Little Mermaid *could* (helping verb) not *forget* (action verb) the charming prince. The verb phrase *could forget* functions as the verb.

A **participial phrase** begins with a participle (verb + -ing or -ed) and includes its modifiers and complements. A participial phrase functions as an adjective that describes a noun in the sentence.

*Springing to his feet*, Robin Hood confronted the challenger.  
Springing to his feet describes Robin Hood, the subject of the main clause.

Robin Hood whistled merrily, *thinking of Maid Marian*.  
Thinking of Maid Marian describes Robin Hood, the subject of the main clause.

*Affronted by their mockery*, Robin challenged the foresters.  
Affronted by their mockery describes Robin, the subject of the main clause.

The path brought them to a broad stream, *spanned by a narrow bridge*.  
Spanned by a narrow bridge describes stream, the object of the prepositional phrase.

Every clause must have an action or a linking verb, not a helping verb.

A #4 -ing opener is a participial opener. See page G-44.



Use a comma after a participial opener (-ing), even if it is short.

**PATTERN -ing word/phrase, main clause**

*Gathering their three gifts*, the soldiers visited the king.  
The thing after the comma is the thing doing the inging.

Place commas around a mid-sentence participial phrase if it is nonessential to the meaning of the sentence.

Robin Hood rose, *needing a change*. (nonessential, comma)



Do not place commas around a mid-sentence participial phrase if it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. See page G-26.

She noticed the prince *searching for her*.  
(essential, no comma) The phrase is essential because it defines what she noticed the prince doing.

## Clause

A clause is a group of related words that contains both a subject and a verb.

A **main clause [MC]** has a subject and a verb. A main clause, sometimes called an independent clause, can stand alone as a sentence because it expresses a complete thought.

The second soldier took the road to the right. [main clause]

A **dependent clause** also has a subject and a verb. However, it cannot stand alone as a sentence because it does not express a complete thought. As a result, a dependent clause, sometimes called a subordinate clause, must be added to a main clause to make sense. Dependent clauses begin with a word that causes them to be an incomplete thought.

Although the second soldier took the road to the right. (dependent clause)

One of the keys to punctuating sentences properly is being able to identify dependent clauses accurately. Every dependent clause functions as either an adjective, an adverb, or a noun.

Identify the clause by 1) focusing on the word that begins the dependent clause and 2) checking the placement of the clause in the sentence. Once the clause function has been determined, properly punctuating the sentence is easy.

**MC**  
Main Clause

Contains:  
subject + verb

stands alone

**D<sup>e</sup>p<sup>e</sup>n<sup>d</sup>e<sup>n</sup>t**  
**C**lause

Contains:  
subject + verb

cannot stand alone

### Main Clause [MC]

subject + verb  
stands alone

[The frog rescued her ball.]

### Dependent Clause

subject + verb  
cannot stand alone

#### Adjective Dependent Clause

[The frog, (who was actually a prince,) rescued her ball.]

*who/which* clause (w/w)  
functions as an adjective  
begins with *who, which, that*  
use commas unless essential

#### Adverb Dependent Clause

(When her ball fell into the well,) [the frog rescued it.]  
[The frog rescued her ball] (when it fell into the well.)

*www.asia.b* clause (AC)  
functions as an adverb  
begins with *www* word  
use comma after but not before

#### Noun Dependent Clause

[Dorinda did not realize] (that the frog was a prince.)

*that* clause (that)  
functions as a noun  
often begins with *that*  
no commas

An **adjective clause** is a dependent clause that functions as an adjective.

Because the adjective clause is a dependent clause, it must be added to a main clause. Most of the time it directly follows the noun or pronoun that it describes.

An adjective clause begins with a relative pronoun (*who, which, that*) or a relative adverb (*where, when, why*) and contains both a subject and a verb. The subject of the adjective clause is often the word it begins with (such as *who, which, where*). See page G-6.

Robin, who lived among them, led the outlaws.

*Robin led the outlaws* is the main clause.

(*Robin* is the subject; *led* is the verb.)

*Who lived among them* is the adjective clause.

(*Who* is the subject; *lived* is the verb.)



Place commas around an adjective clause if it is nonessential to the meaning of the sentence.

Robin, who was happy and carefree, traveled through the forest.  
(nonessential, commas)



Do not place commas around an adjective clause if it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. See page G-26.

The men who followed Robin Hood could be trusted. (essential, no commas) The clause is essential because it defines which men could be trusted.

The *who/which* clause is an adjective clause that begins with *who* or *which*. See page G-39.

An adjective clause that begins with *that* is always essential. Thus, *that* clauses do not take commas.



### Advanced

A relative pronoun introduces the adjective clause and connects it to the main clause. It functions as a pronoun because it replaces the noun or pronoun that precedes it.

The woman served brown bread, <sup>which</sup>~~bread~~ tasted delicious.

An **adverb clause** is a dependent clause that functions as an adverb.

Because the adverb clause is a dependent clause, it must be added to a main clause.

An adverb clause may appear anywhere in a sentence.

An adverb clause begins with a subordinating conjunction (www word) and contains both a subject and a verb. See page G-13.

Eden admired Quinn while she sang her solo.

*Eden admired Quinn* is the main clause.

(*Eden* is the subject; *admired* is the verb.)

*While she sang her solo* is the adverb clause.

(*She* is the subject; *sang* is the verb.)



Use a comma after an adverb clause that comes before a main clause.  
**PATTERN AC, MC**

*When it rained*, Timmy stayed indoors.



Do not use a comma before an adverb clause.  
**PATTERN MC AC**

Timmy stayed indoors (no comma) *when it rained*.

### PATTERN

**www word +  
subject + verb**

A comma is placed before *although*, *while*, or *whereas* when a strong contrast exists. See page G-26.

An adverb clause follows the pattern www word + subject + verb. If a verb is not present, the group of words is likely a prepositional phrase. See page G-18.

A **noun clause** is a dependent clause that functions as a noun.

A noun clause can do any function that a noun can do: subject, object of the preposition, direct object, indirect object, subject complement. See page G-7.

Like the other dependent clauses, the noun clause contains both a subject and a verb. Many noun clauses begin with *that*, but they can also begin with other words, including *how*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *whether*, *which*, *who*, *why*.

*What Dorinda said* disappointed her father.  
What Dorinda said is the subject of the main clause.

Dorinda did not realize *when her actions were unacceptable*.  
When her actions were unacceptable is the direct object of the verb *realize*.

Dorinda's primary problem was *that she was self-centered*.  
That she was self-centered is the subject complement.

An invisible noun clause occurs when the word *that* is implied, not stated directly.

Dorinda never seemed to understand [that] she was responsible.  
*She was responsible* is the direct object of the verbal *to understand*. *That* is implied.

Frederick could tell [that] he would enjoy his stay.  
*He would enjoy his stay* is the direct object of the verb *could tell*. *That* is implied.



Noun clauses do not take commas.

People felt (no comma) *that Robin Hood was like them*.

Robin Hood was pleased (no comma) *that he had escaped*.

The advanced dress-up noun clause is a noun clause that begins with *that*. See page G-41.

Both noun clauses and adjective clauses can begin with the word *that*.

If *which* can be substituted for *that*, the *that* clause is an adjective clause.



#### Advanced

The first word of a dependent clause does not always indicate the type of clause. The word *that* can begin both adjective clauses and noun clauses. The words *where*, *when*, and *why* can begin adjective, adverb, and noun clauses. Accurate identification requires one to consider the way the entire clause is functioning in the sentence.

The Little Mermaid determined to look *where the prince now lived with his bride*.  
The dependent clause begins with *where* and tells the location of where the Little Mermaid looked.  
This is an adverb clause, so a comma is not needed.

The Little Mermaid noticed the sky, *where the rosy dawn glimmered more and more brightly*.  
The dependent clause begins with *where* and directly follows the noun *sky*.  
This is a nonessential adjective clause, so a comma is needed.

# Punctuation

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## End Marks . ? !

### Period

Use a period at the end of a statement.

He bowed and walked away.

Use a period with some abbreviations.

ea. st. Mrs.

### Question Mark

Use a question mark at the end of a question.

Did you ever hear the story of the three poor soldiers?

### Exclamation Mark

Use an exclamation mark at the end of a sentence that expresses strong emotion.

No one calls me a coward!

Use an exclamation mark after an interjection that expresses strong emotion.

Yuck! I won't touch another bite.

Use only one end mark.

"You're sure?"  
"Hah!" he said.  
(correct)

"You're sure?!"  
"Hah!," he said.  
(incorrect)



## Commas ,

### Adjectives before a Noun

Use a comma to separate **coordinate adjectives**. Adjectives are coordinate if each adjective independently describes the noun that follows. The order is not important.

The woman had a pointed, protruding nose.

It sounds right to say both *protruding, pointed nose* and *pointed and protruding nose*.

The adjectives are coordinate and the comma is necessary.

Do not use a comma to separate **cumulative adjectives**. Adjectives are cumulative if the first adjective describes the second adjective and the noun that follows. Cumulative adjectives follow this specific order: quantity, opinion, size, age, shape, color, origin, material, purpose.

The soldiers reached the tall green gate.

It does not sound right to say *green tall gate* or *tall and green gate*.

The adjectives are cumulative and should not have a comma.

### Noun of Direct Address (NDA)

Place commas around a noun of direct address. See page G-7.

*My friends*, for fourteen days we have enjoyed no sport.

For fourteen days, *my friends*, we have enjoyed no sport.

For fourteen days we have enjoyed no sport, *my friends*.

### Items in a Series

**PATTERN a, b, and c** Use commas to separate three or more items in a series. Place the final comma before the coordinating conjunction. These items must be grammatically the same.

He *ran* to the window, *opened* it, and *jumped* out.

The cook removed the *tomatoes*, *beans*, and *cucumbers*.

**PATTERN a and b** Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects two items in a series unless they are main clauses.

The cook removed the *tomatoes* (no comma) and *cucumbers*.

The cook *yelled* (no comma) and *ran*.

### Compound Verb

**PATTERN MC cc 2nd verb** Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects two verbs (a compound verb) with the same subject. There is no subject after the cc.

The cook *yelled* (no comma) and *ran*.

He *ran* to the window (no comma) and *opened* it.

### Compound Sentence

**PATTERN MC, cc MC** Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when it connects two main clauses (a compound sentence). There is a subject and a verb after the cc.

The *cook yelled*, and the *mouse ran*.

*He ran* to the window, and *he opened* it.

Only coordinate adjectives need to be separated with a comma.

Adjectives are coordinate if you can reverse their order or add *and* between them.

Adjectives are cumulative if they must be arranged in a specific order.

The Oxford Comma is the comma before the coordinating conjunction in three or more items in a series. Although the Oxford comma is optional if there is no danger of misreading, writers do not always recognize potential confusion. It is wise to include it since the addition of the Oxford Comma is rarely wrong.

This is the same as pattern a and b.

The comma in the MC, cc MC pattern is optional when the clauses are short and there is no danger of misreading.

## Prepositional Phrase Opener (#2 Sentence Opener)

If a prepositional opener has five words or more, follow it with a comma.

*Under the table* (no comma) the tiny mouse hid.

*Under the heavy wooden table*, the tiny mouse hid.

If two or more prepositional phrases open a sentence, follow the last phrase with a comma.

*Under the heavy wooden table in the kitchen*, the tiny mouse hid.

If a prepositional opener functions as a transition, follow it with a comma.

*Of course*, the cook was afraid of mice.

If a prepositional opener is followed by a main clause that has the verb before the subject, do not use a comma.

*Under the heavy wooden table* hid a tiny mouse.

Prepositional phrases that work as transitions and require commas include

in fact  
in addition  
by the way  
by contrast  
for example  
for instance  
of course  
on the other hand

## Mid-Sentence Prepositional Phrase

Do not put a comma in front of a prepositional phrase unless the phrase is a transition.

The mouse hid (no comma) *under a table in the kitchen*.

The cook was, *of course*, afraid of mice.

When transitional words connect two main clauses, put a semicolon before and a comma after. See page G-29.

## Transition and Interrupter

Place commas around a transition and an interrupter.

*Of course*, Dorinda and Maribella lived in the castle.

As grown-up girls, *on the other hand*, they could leave when they pleased.

They rarely left the palace grounds, *however*.

## -ly Adverb Opener (#3 Sentence Opener)

Use a comma if an -ly adverb opener modifies the sentence.

*Foolishly*, Timmy bit into a hot pepper.

Test: It was foolish that Timmy bit ... makes sense. *Foolishly* modifies the sentence.

Do not use a comma if an -ly adverb opener modifies the verb.

*Eagerly* Timmy ate a ripe cucumber.

Test: It was eager that Timmy ate ... does not make sense. *Eagerly* modifies the verb *ate*.

Test:

It was \_\_\_ that \_\_\_.

## Participial Phrase Opener (#4 Sentence Opener)

Use a comma after a participial opener (-ing), even if it is short.

*Excusing herself from the table*, Dorinda hurried away.

## Adverb Clause Opener (#5 Sentence Opener)

**PATTERN AC, MC** Use a comma after an adverb clause opener.

*When the cat prowled at night*, the mice hid.

## Mid-Sentence Adverb Clause

**PATTERN AC, MC** Use a comma after an adverb clause that comes before a main clause.

Early that morning *when Timmy saw the cat*, he was aghast.

**PATTERN MC AC** Do not use a comma before an adverb clause.

Early that morning Timmy was aghast (no comma) *when he saw the cat*.

## Quotation

Use a comma to separate an attribution from a direct quote.

A throaty voice offered, “I should be honored to find your ball.”

“I should be honored,” a throaty voice offered, “to find your ball.”

“I should be honored to find your ball,” a throaty voice offered.

The attribution is the narrative that includes the person speaking and the speaking verb (*he said*).

## Comparing Items

Do not use a comma when making a comparison.

Robin was a better shot (no comma) *than the other archers*.

## Contrasting Items

Use a comma to separate contrasting parts of a sentence.

The ideas in this story are the rooster’s thoughts, *not mine*.

Use a comma even if the contrasting part begins with *www* words *although*, *while*, or *whereas*. This rule applies only when there is an extreme contrast and is an exception to **MC AC**.

He seemed interested, *whereas* she did not.

Timmy favored the country, *while* Johnny preferred the city.

Use a comma to contrast, not compare.

## Appositive, Adjective Clause, Mid-Sentence Participial Phrase

A nonessential appositive, adjective clause, or mid-sentence participial phrase adds information to a sentence.

Use commas to separate nonessential elements from the rest of the sentence.

Robin Hood, *the archer*, led his men through the forest.

Little John, *who liked a challenge*, readily followed Robin.

The men hiked through the forest, *laughing at each other*.

An essential appositive, adjective clause, or mid-sentence participial phrase defines the noun it follows. If the essential information is removed, the overall meaning of the sentence changes.

Do not use commas with essential elements.

The archer *Robin Hood* led his men through the forest.

The men *who followed Robin Hood* could be trusted.

The man *walking across the bridge* was a stranger.

To determine if a phrase or clause is essential, remove it from the sentence to see if it changes the meaning of the sentence.

Little John, *who liked a challenge*, readily followed Robin.

Remove the *who/which* clause: Little John readily followed Robin. This does not change the meaning of the sentence. This *who* clause is nonessential. Use commas.

The men *who followed Robin Hood* could be trusted.

Remove the *who/which* clause: The men could be trusted. This changes the meaning because the reader does not know which men could be trusted. This *who* clause is essential. Do not use commas.

An appositive is an invisible *who/which* clause. See page G-39.

A *who/which* clause is an adjective clause.

A participial phrase is an -ing phrase.

Nonessential items need commas.

Essential items eliminate commas.

In some cases, the commas determine the meaning of the sentence.

Even the footmen, *who once obeyed her*, snubbed her.

With commas this sentence indicates all footmen snubbed her and all once obeyed her.

Even the footmen *who once obeyed her* snubbed her.

Without commas this same sentence now indicates that only those footmen who once obeyed her now snubbed her.

## Quotation Marks “ ”

### Direct Quotation

Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations.

“I want to live above the sea,” said the Little Mermaid.

### Indirect Quotation

Do not use quotation marks with indirect speech, which usually begins with *that*.

The Little Mermaid said that she wanted to live above the sea.

### Thoughts

When typing, place thoughts in italics. When handwriting, use quotation marks.

*I do not want a fish's tail,* thought the Little Mermaid.

### Punctuating a Quotation

Use a comma to separate an attribution from a direct quote. If a direct quote is an exclamation or question, follow it with an exclamation or question mark.

Attribution, “Quote.”

Attribution, “Quote!”

Attribution, “Quote?”

“Quote,” attribution.

“Quote!” attribution.

“Quote?” attribution.

Commas and periods always go inside closing quotation marks.

“I want to live above the sea,” said the Little Mermaid.

Hans Christian Andersen wrote “The Little Mermaid.”

Exclamation marks and question marks go inside closing quotations when they are part of the quoted material; otherwise, they go outside.

“Can humans live forever?” the Little Mermaid asked.

Did Grandmother say, “Humans can live forever”?

When a spoken sentence is interrupted, close the first part and begin the second with quotation marks. Do not capitalize the first letter of the continuation.

“Human beings have a soul,” explained Grandmother, “that lives eternally.”

In conversation, if someone speaking changes topic, start a new paragraph. Close the first paragraph without a quotation mark to signal the speaker has not finished speaking. Open the new paragraph with a quotation mark to indicate that someone is still speaking.

The prince responded, “You remind me of a girl I once met.

“Long ago, my ship wrecked, and the waves cast me ashore. A maiden saved my life.”

### Referencing Words

When typing, place words referred to as words in italics or quotation marks. When handwriting, use quotation marks.

The king believed *sir* and *madam* should be used when addressing one's elders.

### Single Quotation Marks

Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations.

The maid said, “Strip the mattresses since, as the queen put it, ‘They might be unclean.’”

There should not be a space between the quotation mark and the word or punctuation it encloses.

The attribution is the narrative that includes the person speaking and the speaking verb (*he said*).

Insert “the word(s)” or “the name” before the word in question to tell if this rule applies.

This is the only reason to use single quotation marks.

# Apostrophes ’

## Contraction

Use an apostrophe to show where a letter or letters have been removed.

- I’ll figure out how to trick them.
- It’s too bad, but we’d better go our separate ways.

## Possessive Adjective

Use an apostrophe to show possession.

To form singular possessives, add an apostrophe + s.

- the second soldier’s turn

To form plural possessives, make the noun plural; then add an apostrophe.

- the soldiers’ last night at the palace (the last night of all three soldiers)

An exception is irregular plural possessives.

- the children’s mittens and the women’s scarves

## Plural Noun

Do not use an apostrophe to make a word plural.

- The *soldiers* each took a turn.
- The *princesses* received whatever they requested.

## Possessive Pronoun

Do not use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns.

- his, hers, its, theirs, ours, yours

Possessive Pronouns	Contractions
its	it’s (it is)
their	they’re (they are)
theirs	there’s (there is)
whose	who’s (who is)

# Ellipsis Points ...

## Fictional Writing

Use ellipsis points to signal hesitation or a reflective pause, especially in dialogue.

- “Ahem ...” Lord Ashton cleared his throat conspicuously.
- “Um ... certainly ... the mattress test,” the king sighed.

## Nonfictional Writing

Use ellipses only when omitting words from a direct quotation.

## Semicolons ;

### Main Clauses

**PATTERN MC; MC** Use a semicolon to join main clauses that are closely related and parallel in construction.

The Little Mermaid pondered golden sunsets; she dreamed of twinkling stars.

### Conjunctive Adverb

**PATTERN MC; ca, MC.** If a conjunctive adverb is used to connect two main clauses that express similar ideas, put a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb and a comma after.

Years of indulgence had spoiled her beyond recognition; *however*, Lady Constance recalled a time in Dorinda's childhood when she had been a lovable child.

Conjunctive adverbs are transition words.

### Items in a Series

Use semicolons to separate items in a series when the items contain internal commas.

Highborn women lamented when Troy, that noble city celebrated by Homer, fell through trickery; when Pyrrhus, ancient Greek ruler, seized King Priam by the beard; and when the Romans, ruthless and crazed, torched Carthage to the ground.

## Colons :

### List

**PATTERN MC: list** Use a colon after a main clause to introduce a list when a phrase like *for example* is not included.

Robin Hood had two choices: run away or fight.

Colons follow a complete thought and mean *see what follows* or *an example follows*.

### Explanation

**PATTERN MC: explanation** Use a colon after a main clause to introduce an explanation when a phrase like *for example* is not included.

One other thing I ask: please accept this simple souvenir from me.

### Quotation

**PATTERN MC: quotation** Use a colon when a complete thought sets up a quotation.

The innkeeper answered him straightaway: "Sir, your friend left town at dawn."

Contrast this with an attribution. The innkeeper answered, "Sir, your friend left town at dawn."

### Titles with Subtitles

**PATTERN Title: Subtitle** Use a colon to separate a title from a subtitle.

Charles Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist*: *The Parish Boy's Progress* and *A Christmas Carol*: *A Ghost Story of Christmas*.

## Hyphens -

### Numbers

Use a hyphen with compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and with fractions.

thirty-seven; one-fourth

### Compound Nouns

Use hyphens with some compound nouns.

lady-in-waiting; mother-in-law; self-restraint

### Compound Adjectives

Use a hyphen when two or more words come before a noun they describe and act as a single idea.

The *nineteenth-century* author enjoyed his fame.

The *five-year-old* boy cried.

When a compound adjective follows the noun it describes, the adjective may or may not be hyphenated. If in doubt, consult a dictionary.

The boy was *five years old*.

Mowgli was *self-confident*.

## Em Dashes and Parentheses — ( )

### Emphasis

Use em dashes to emphasize something.

Your word—of all people’s—must be trustworthy.

Use em dashes in place of commas when you want to draw attention to something.

### Interruption

Use em dashes to indicate an interruption in speech or a sudden break in thought.

His younger daughter—now there was another topic that brought red to his face—embarrassed him in front of the guests.

Use parentheses in place of commas when you want to offer an aside.

### Nonessential Elements

Use em dashes to set off nonessential elements that have commas inside them.

The poor widow owned a few farm animals—three hefty sows, three cows, and a sheep dubbed Molly—with which she attempted to eke out a living.

### Extra Information

Use parentheses to provide extra information.

“Oh, yes, benevolent frog!” (Notice that in fairy tales, characters don’t have great curiosity about such oddities as talking frogs.)

# Additional Concepts

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## Indentation

In copy work, indent by doing two things: 1) start on the next line, and 2) start writing ½ inch from the left margin.

To mark indentation, add the ¶ symbol or an arrow (➔) in front of each sentence that should start a new paragraph.

In fiction (stories), there are four reasons to start a new paragraph.

The paragraph mark (¶) is called a pilcrow.

### New Speaker

Start a new paragraph when a new character speaks. Include the attribution with the quotation.

She cried loudly, “Thieves!”

If a narrative sentence sets up the quotation, it should go in the same paragraph as the quoted sentence.

The stranger came right to the point. “It is cowardly to stand there with a lethal arrow aimed at my heart.”

If a narrative follows a quotation in a separate sentence but points directly back to the quotation, it can also go in the same paragraph.

“It is cowardly to stand there with a lethal arrow aimed at my heart.” The stranger did not mince words.

### New Topic

Start a new paragraph when the narrator or a character switches topic or focus.

### New Place

Start a new paragraph when the story switches to a new location. If several switches are made in quick succession, such as a character’s journey to find something, it may be less choppy to keep in one paragraph.

### New Time

Start a new paragraph when the time changes unless there are several time shifts in close succession that make sense together in a single paragraph.



## Capitalization

### Sentence

Capitalize the first word of a sentence and of a quoted sentence, even when it does not begin the full sentence.

The princess cried, “**M**y nose has grown too long.”

Do not capitalize the first word of an attribution when it follows the quoted sentence.

“My nose has grown too long,” **t**he princess cried.

“You must be content!” **u**rged grandmother

### Quotation Continues

When a spoken sentence is interrupted, do not capitalize the first letter of the continuation.

“**M**y nose,” the princess cried, “**h**as grown too long.”

### Proper Nouns and Adjectives

Capitalize proper nouns and adjectives derived from proper nouns.

Sherwood Forest; Robin Hood; English flag

### Titles

Capitalize titles that precede a name. Do not capitalize titles that are not used with a name.

In 1952 *Queen Elizabeth II* became the *queen* of England.

Capitalize titles that substitute for a name in a noun of direct address.

“Can you clean his wound, *Doctor*?”

Do not capitalize family members unless used as a substitute for a name or with a name.

He succeeded his *father* as king.

Did *Father* say that we could play outside?

An exception is *sir* or *madam* as a noun of direct address: “Stand back, *sir*,” demanded Robin.

### Calendar Words

Capitalize days of the week and months of the year. Do not capitalize seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter.

Timmy enjoyed peas on a hot *summer Wednesday* evening in *June*.

### Directions

Capitalize compass directions when they refer to a region or proper name. Do not capitalize these words when they indicate direction. Do not capitalize words like *northward* or *northern*.

On her journey *north* Eden encountered few obstacles.

Eden is heading in a *northward* direction but not traveling to a region known as the *North*.

### Literary Titles and Subtitles

Capitalize the first word and the last word of titles and subtitles. Capitalize all other words except articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions.

A young girl recited “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

Read *Mozart: The Wonder Boy* by next week.

# Numbers

## Words

Spell out numbers that can be expressed in one or two words.

twenty; fifty-three; three hundred

Dorinda had racked up *one thousand* text messages on her cell phone in one month.

Spell out ordinal numbers.

first, second, third

The next year the *second* sister was permitted to rise to the surface.

## Numerals

Use numerals for numbers that use three or more words.

123; 204

That evening 250 rockets rose in the air.

Never begin a sentence with a numeral.

1492 is a famous year in history. (incorrect)

The year 1492 is a famous year in history. (correct)

Use numerals with dates. Do not include *st*, *nd*, *rd*, or *th*.

December 25, not December 25th

Meet me at the Green Chapel in one year and one day on January 1, 1400.

Use numerals when numbers are mixed with symbols.

We received \$500 in donations last month.

We can expect at least 40% of those invited to attend.



# Homophones and Usage

## Homophones

Homophones are words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

**there** *There* is an adverb pointing to a place or point: *over there* (there is the spot).  
**their** *Their* is a possessive pronoun: *their house* (the house belongs to them).  
**they're** *They're* is a contraction: *they're finished* (they are finished).

Although less common, *there* can function as a noun, pronoun, or adjective.

**your** *Your* is a possessive pronoun: *your weapon* (the weapon belongs to you).  
**you're** *You're* is a contraction: *you're finished* (you are finished).

**to** *To* is a preposition or part of an infinitive: *to the left* (preposition); *to rush* (infinitive).  
**two** *Two* is a number: *two women* (2 women).  
**too** *Too* is an adverb meaning also or to an excessive degree: *I'll go too; too far*.

**its** *Its* is a possessive pronoun: *its wing* (the wing belongs to the bird).  
**it's** *It's* is a contraction: *it's too bad* (it is too bad).

**then** *Then* is an adverb meaning next or immediately after: *wake and then eat*.  
**than** *Than* is a word used to show a comparison: *Sam is shorter than Bob*.

**affect** *Affect* is a verb that means to have an influence or to cause:  
 Dorinda was too self-centered for anyone else to *affect* her deeply.

**effect** *Effect* is a noun that refers to the result of some action:  
 Years of indulgence had the obvious *effect* of spoiling Dorinda.

The definitions given for *affect* and *effect* are the most commonly used.

## Usage

Usage errors occur when a word is used incorrectly.

**between** *Between* is a preposition that refers to two items: She stood *between* the (two) trees.  
**among** *Among* is a preposition that refers to three or more items: She walked *among* them.

**like** *Like* is a preposition that compares a noun to a noun: Waves rose *like* mountains.  
**as** *As* is a subordinating conjunction that compares a noun to an idea (subject + verb).  
 The waves rose suddenly *as* the storm swelled.  
*As* is a preposition when it means in the role of: They traveled *as* adults.

**farther** *Farther* refers to measurable distance: I jumped *farther* than I did yesterday.  
**further** *Further* refers to a figurative distance: We want to avoid *further* delays.  
*Further* functions as a verb when it means to promote: He will *further* the agenda.

Use *farthest* like *farther*, *furthest* like *further*.

**lie** *Lie* is a verb that means to recline or remain: The hen rarely *lies* down.  
**lay** *Lay* is a verb that means to put something down: Daily, the hen *lays* an egg.

The past tense of *lie* is *lay*, which is the same as the present tense of *to lay*.

infinitive	present	past	past participle
<i>to lie</i>	<i>lie</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>lain</i>
<i>to lay</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>laid</i>	<i>laid</i>

Present: The hens *lie* down (recline) after they *lay* eggs (put eggs down).

Past: Yesterday the hens *lay* down (reclined) after they *laid* eggs (put eggs down).



# Stylistic Techniques

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*Fix It!* stories teach the stylistic techniques of the Institute for Excellence in Writing. Dress-ups are placed within sentences to strengthen vocabulary and add complex sentence structures. Sentence openers are different ways to begin sentences, encouraging sentence variety. Decorations are stylistic devices that embellish prose.

## Dress-Ups

Dress-ups are descriptive words, phrases, and clauses that are placed within a sentence.

Three of the dress-ups encourage stronger vocabulary: -ly adverb, strong verb, quality adjective. The other dress-ups encourage more complex sentence structure: *who/which* clause and *www.asia.b* clause.

### -ly Adverb Dress-Up

An -ly adverb is an adverb that ends in -ly. Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Most often they tell *how* or *when* something is done. The -ly adverb dress-up is used to enhance the meaning of a word. See page G-15.

See a list of -ly adverbs on page G-43.

Notice how the meaning of this sentence changes when different -ly adverbs are added:

She masqueraded as a poor girl.

She *cleverly* masqueraded as a poor girl.

She *arrogantly* masqueraded as a poor girl.

She *deceptively* masqueraded as a poor girl.

Not all words that end in -ly are adverbs. Impostor -ly adverbs are adjectives. If the word ending in -ly describes a noun, it is an adjective and not an adverb.

Adjective Test:  
the \_\_\_\_\_ pen

To find -ly adverbs to use in your writing, use a thesaurus or vocabulary words. Alternatively, look at -ly adverb word lists on the *Portable Walls for Structure and Style Students®* or the IEW Writing Tools App.

### Common Impostors

These -ly words are adjectives.

chilly	holy	lovely	queenly
friendly	kingly	lowly	ugly
ghastly	knightly	orderly	worldly
ghostly	lonely	prickly	wrinkly

## Strong Verb Dress-Up

A strong verb is an action verb that creates a strong image or feeling. It helps a reader picture what someone or something is doing. See page G-9.

Challenge students to distinguish between strong verbs and vague ones.

The mermaids often *went* to the castle.

The mermaids often *visited* the castle and *toured* its opulent halls.

The horse *was* in the barn.

The horse *buried* itself in the hay.

The mermaids' hands *were nibbled* on by the fish.

The fish *nibbled* the mermaids' hands.

Verb Test:

I \_\_\_\_.

It \_\_\_\_.

## Quality Adjective Dress-Up

A quality adjective is a descriptive word that provides specific details about a noun or pronoun. Like a strong verb, a quality adjective provides a strong image or feeling. See page G-14.

Notice how the image of *brook* changes with the use of different adjectives. In both examples, the first suggested adjective is weak, whereas the other two provide a stronger image or feeling.

He hurdled the *small* brook.

He hurdled the *narrow* brook.

He hurdled the *babbling* brook.

The *big* stranger greeted Robin.

The *confident* stranger greeted Robin.

The *disagreeable* stranger greeted Robin.

Adjective Test:

the \_\_\_\_ pen

To find strong verbs and quality adjectives to use in your writing, use a thesaurus or vocabulary words. Alternatively, look at word lists on the *Portable Walls for Structure and Style Students* or the IEW Writing Tools App.



### Advanced

Deliberate use of dual -ly adverbs, strong verbs, or quality adjectives, especially when the words add a different nuance, enriches prose and challenges students to be precise with words chosen. Classic writers of the past like Charles Dickens and persuasive essayists like Winston Churchill have used duals and triples to convey their meaning most powerfully.

The ship glided away *smoothly* and *lightly* over the tranquil sea.

The wind *filled* and *lifted* the ship's sails.

All who beheld her wondered at her *graceful*, *swaying* movements.

To punctuate dual adjectives properly, see page G-24.

## Who/Which Clause Dress-Up

A *who/which* clause is a dependent clause that provides description or additional information about the noun it follows.

Robin Hood cut a staff, *which measured six feet in length*.  
Which measured six feet in length describes the staff.

Frederick hoped to make friends with the princess, *who frequently visited the garden*.  
Who frequently visited the garden describes the princess.

A *who/which* clause is a dependent clause that begins with the word *who* or *which*.

Use *who* when referring to people, personified animals, and pets.  
Use *which* when referring to things, animals, and places.

Because the *who/which* clause is a dependent clause, it must be added to a sentence that is already complete. If only the word *who* or *which* is added, a fragment is formed.

The noise alerted Sam. (sentence)  
The noise, *which alerted Sam*. (fragment)  
The noise alerted Sam, *who drove to safety*. (sentence)  
The noise, *which alerted Sam*, alerted him to drive to safety. (sentence)

The *who/which* clause immediately follows the noun it describes.

Forms of *who* include *whom* and *whose*.  
See page G-6.

If the *who/which* clause is removed, a sentence must remain.



Place commas around a *who/which* clause if it is nonessential to the meaning of the sentence.

William, *who had little*, shared with his neighbors. (nonessential, commas)



Do not place commas around a *who/which* clause if it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. See page G-26.

The students *who finished the test* left early. (essential, no commas)  
The clause is essential because it defines which students left early.

Although the word *that* may begin an adjective clause, a *that* clause is not a *who/which* clause dress-up.



### Advanced

A *who* clause always describes a single noun.

A *which* clause can describe a single noun, or it can describe the entire idea that comes before *which*.

You have killed the king's deer, *which is a capital offense*.  
It is not the *deer* (noun before *which* clause) that is the offense but killing it—the entire idea expressed in the main clause.

If a *who/which* clause contains a *be* verb, the *who* or *which* and the *be* verb can be removed to form an invisible *who/which* clause. An invisible *who/which* clause is called an appositive or appositive phrase, not a clause because the subject (*who* or *which*) and the *be* verb have been removed from the written sentence. Follow the same comma rules.

Dorinda frustrated Lady Constance, ~~who was~~ her companion since childhood.

All had come to Sherwood Forest, ~~which was~~ a vast, uncharted wood.



## www.asia.b Clause Dress-Up

A *www.asia.b* clause is a dependent clause that usually functions as an adverb. It begins with a subordinating conjunction (*www* word) and contains both a subject and a verb.

Robin Hood and his band guffawed loudly *until the stranger showed irritation*.  
Remain on the other side *while I make a staff*.

There are many subordinating conjunctions. The most common are taught using the acronym *www.asia.b*: when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because. Other words function as subordinating conjunctions: after, before, until, unless, whenever, whereas, than. See page G-13.

Because the *www.asia.b* clause is a dependent clause, it must be added to a main clause. Although an adverb clause may appear anywhere in a sentence, the *www.asia.b* clause dress-up should not begin a sentence because only sentence openers begin sentences.

### PATTERN

**www word +  
subject + verb**

Memorize the most common *www* words using the acronym *www.asia.b*: when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because.



Use a comma after an adverb clause that comes before a main clause.

**PATTERN AC, MC**

That morning *while it rained*, Timmy stayed indoors.



Do not use a comma before an adverb clause.

**PATTERN MC AC**

Timmy stayed indoors (no comma) *when it rained*.

An adverb clause follows the pattern *www* word + subject + verb. If a verb is not present, the group of words is likely a prepositional phrase and not an adverb clause.

Dorinda prepared the guestroom *after supper*.

After supper is not a clause because it does not contain a subject and a verb.

After supper is a prepositional phrase.

Dorinda prepared the guestroom *after they ate supper*.

After they ate supper is a clause because it contains both a subject (they) and a verb (ate).

Two tricks help tell the difference between a phrase and a clause.

Look for a verb. A clause must have a verb. A prepositional phrase will not have a verb.

Drop the first word of the phrase or clause in question and look at what is left.

If it is a sentence, the group of words is an adverb clause; if it is not, the words form a prepositional phrase.

*after supper*

This does not have a verb. This does not form a sentence. This is a phrase.

*after they ate supper*

This has a verb (ate). This forms a sentence. This is a clause.



### Advanced

When the *www* words *as*, *where*, *when* begin a clause that follows and describes a noun, the clause is probably an adjective clause. Test by inserting *which is* between the noun and *www* word. If it sounds correct, the clause is an adjective clause, not an adverb clause. Punctuate accordingly. See pages G-21 and G-26.

King Arthur decided to climb to the top of the cliff, *where he could drink from the pool of water*.

King Arthur decided to climb to the top of the cliff, [which is] *where he could drink from the pool of water*.

This is an adjective clause beginning with the word *where*. Because it is nonessential, it requires commas.

When the *www* words *although*, *while*, and *whereas* present an extreme contrast to the main clause in the sentence, insert a comma. This is an exception to the more common rule **MC AC**. See page G-26.

Timmy favored the country, *while* Johnny preferred the city.

## Advanced Dress-Ups

### Dual -ly Adverbs, Strong Verbs, Quality Adjectives

Deliberate use of dual -ly adverbs, strong verbs, or quality adjectives, especially when the words add a different nuance, enriches prose and challenges students to be precise with words chosen. Classic writers of the past like Charles Dickens and persuasive essayists like Winston Churchill have used duals and triples to convey their meaning most powerfully.

The ship glided away *smoothly* and *lightly* over the tranquil sea.  
 The wind *filled* the ship's sails and *propelled* the ship through the sea.  
 All who beheld her wondered at her *graceful*, *swaying* movements.

### Invisible Who/Which Clause

An invisible *who/which* clause is formed when the word *who* or *which* is followed by a *be* verb. Removing *who* or *which* and the *be* verb that follows allows for a more elegant construction. Follow the same comma rules.

Dorinda frustrated Lady Constance, ~~who was~~ her companion since childhood.  
 All had come to Sherwood Forest, ~~which was~~ a vast, uncharted wood.

Not all *who/which* clauses can be made invisible.

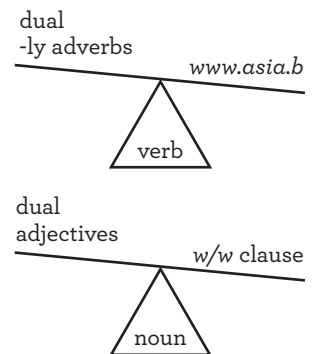
### Teeter-TotTERS

The adverb teeter-totter uses a verb as a fulcrum with dual -ly adverbs preceding the verb and a *www.asia.b* clause following it. Both the -ly adverbs and the *www.asia.b* clause modify the same verb. **PATTERN -ly -ly verb *www.asia.b***

The tortoise *slowly* yet *steadily* finished the race *as the crowd watched in awe*.

The adjective teeter-totter uses a noun as a fulcrum with dual quality adjectives preceding the noun and a *who/which* clause following it. Both the quality adjectives and the *who/which* clause describe the same noun. **PATTERN adjective adjective noun *w/w***

The Little Mermaid placed the prince on the *fine white* sand, *which the sun had warmed*.



### Noun Clause

A noun clause dress-up is a dependent clause that functions as a noun and begins with the word *that*. It typically follows a verb and answers the question *what*.

If the *that* clause is an adjective clause and not a noun clause, the word *which* can replace *that*.

The king of the beasts never imagined *that* a puny rodent could help him.  
 The king of the beasts never imagined *which* a puny rodent could help him.  
 This does not make sense. This is not an adjective clause but a noun clause.

The king of the beasts was freed from a net *that* a mouse had persistently gnawed.  
 The king of the beasts was freed from a net *which* a mouse had persistently gnawed.  
 This makes sense. This is an adjective clause. See page G-21.

An invisible noun clause occurs when the word *that* is implied, not stated directly.

Dorinda never seemed to understand [that] *she was responsible*.

Frederick could tell [that] *he would relish his palace stay*.



Noun clauses do not take commas.

People felt (no comma) *that Robin Hood was like them*.

Robin Hood was pleased (no comma) *that he had escaped*.

# Sentence Openers

Sentence openers are descriptive words, phrases, and clauses that are added to the beginning of a sentence.

There are six openers—six ways to open or begin a sentence. Using various sentence openers forces sentence variety, which will improve writing quality. Learning the sentence opener patterns and their related comma rules will result in sophisticated writing skills.

## #1 Subject Opener

A subject opener is simply a sentence that begins with its subject. This is the kind of sentence one most naturally writes. A subject opener begins with the subject of the sentence.

Fish glide among the branches.

There may be an article or adjectives in front of the subject, but that does not change the sentence structure. It is still a #1 subject opener.

The colorful fish glide among the branches.

## #2 Prepositional Opener

A prepositional opener is a prepositional phrase placed at the beginning of a sentence. See pages G-8 and G-18.



If a prepositional opener has five words or more, follow it with a comma.

*Under the table* (no comma) the tiny mouse hid.

*Under the heavy wooden table*, the tiny mouse hid.

If two or more prepositional phrases open a sentence, follow the last phrase with a comma.

*Under the heavy wooden table in the kitchen*, the tiny mouse hid.

If a prepositional opener functions as a transition, follow it with a comma.

*In fact*, the cook was afraid of mice.



If a prepositional opener is followed by a main clause that has the verb before the subject, do not use a comma.

*Under the heavy wooden table* hid a tiny mouse.

### PATTERN

preposition + noun  
(no verb)

*Because of* begins  
prepositional phrases.

*Because* begins  
clauses.



### Advanced

An invisible prepositional opener is formed when some kind of time is followed by the main clause. The preposition *on* or *during* is implied.

~~On~~ *Wednesday* we will go to the beach.

~~On~~ *The day before yesterday* we visited the park.

~~During~~ *That afternoon* she visited friends.

### #3 -ly Adverb Opener

An -ly adverb opener is an -ly adverb placed at the beginning of a sentence. Beginning the sentence with an -ly adverb changes the rhythm of the sentence.

Test:

It was \_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_.



Use a comma if an -ly adverb opener modifies the sentence.

*Foolishly*, Timmy bit into a hot pepper.

Test: It was foolish that Timmy bit ... makes sense.

*Foolishly* modifies the sentence. A comma is required.



Do not use a comma if an -ly adverb opener modifies the verb.

*Eagerly* Timmy ate a ripe cucumber.

Test: It was eager that Timmy ate a ripe cucumber ... does not make sense. *Eagerly* modifies the verb *ate*. A comma is not needed.



#### Advanced

In some cases, the comma indicates the meaning of the sentence.

Sorrowfully Timmy acceded to the counsel of Johnny.

He acceded, but he did so sorrowfully, with regret.

Sorrowfully, Timmy acceded to the counsel of Johnny.

This opener indicates that Timmy made a mistake in acceding to Johnny's advice.

It is sorrowful that Timmy acceded to his Johnny's counsel.

#### -ly Adverbs List

angrily	critically	historically	mournfully	sleepily	unhappily
annoyingly	deceptively	hopefully	oddly	slyly	usually
boredly	disappointingly	horribly	proudly	sneakily	viciously
busily	discouragingly	joyfully	rapidly	strangely	vigorously
commonly	excitedly	kindly	repeatedly	suddenly	violently
completely	finally	meanly	sadly	tragically	warmly
constantly	greedily	miraculously	seriously	uncomfortably	willfully
continuously	happily	mostly	shamefully	unexpectedly	wisely

## #4 -ing Opener

An -ing opener is a participial phrase placed at the beginning of a sentence.

Taking up his bow, Robin Hood shot with unparalleled skill.

**PATTERN -ing word/phrase, main clause.** This is the most sophisticated sentence pattern. It is easily written when the pattern is followed. The sentence must begin with an action word that ends in -ing. This is called a participle. The -ing word/phrase and comma are followed by a main clause. The thing (subject of main clause) after the comma must be the thing doing the inging.

Gathering their three gifts, the soldiers visited a neighboring king. The sentence begins with an action word that ends in -ing: *Gathering*

The -ing word/phrase and comma are followed by a main clause: *the soldiers visited a neighboring king.*

The thing (subject of main clause) after the comma must be the thing doing the inging: *soldiers (subject) are gathering.*

An illegal #4 opener is grammatically incorrect. If the thing after the comma is not the thing doing the inging, the sentence does not make sense. This is known as a dangling modifier.

Hopping quickly, Dorinda let the frog follow her to the dining hall.

Who was hopping quickly? *Dorinda*. This is incorrect because the frog was hopping quickly.

An impostor #4 opener begins with an -ing word but does not follow the pattern. There are two types.

Living at the splendid castle cheered the soldiers.

This is a #1 subject opener. There is neither a comma nor a subject doing the inging. *Living* is the subject.

During the dance she twirled him around.

This is a #2 prepositional opener. *She* (the subject) is not doing the *during*.

Prepositions ending in -ing include *concerning*, *according to*, *regarding*, *during*.

A #4 -ing opener is a participial opener.

The thing after the comma must be the thing doing the inging.



### Advanced

An invisible -ing opener is formed when *being* is implied before the first word of the sentence. Removing the word *being* allows for a more elegant construction. Follow the same comma rules.

**Being** Quick-witted and agile, Robert compensated for his limitation with an eagerness to please.

**Being** Relaxed and untroubled, the stranger genially waited for him.

**Being** Encouraged by Samuel's speech, William stepped onto the stage.

## #5 Clausal Opener

A clausal opener is an adverb clause placed at the beginning of a sentence. This opener is the same as the *www.asia.b* dress-up. The only difference is placement in the sentence. The opener begins a sentence.

9

**PATTERN AC, MC** Use a comma after an adverb clause opener.

*If possessions were plundered,* Robin and his men would recapture the goods and return them to the poor.

*As he approached,* Robin Hood noticed a tall stranger on the other side of the stream.

*When Robin attempted to cross the river,* the stranger blocked his way.

**PATTERN**

**www word +  
subject + verb**

*Because* begins clauses.

*Because of* begins prepositional phrases.

An adverb clause follows the pattern *www word + subject + verb*. If a verb is not present, the group of words is likely a prepositional phrase and not an adverb clause.

*After supper,* Dorinda prepared the guestroom.

*After supper* is not a clause because it does not contain a subject and a verb.

*After supper* is a prepositional phrase.

*After they ate supper,* Dorinda prepared the guestroom.

*After they ate supper* is a clause because it contains both a subject (they) and a verb (ate).

Two tricks help tell the difference between a phrase and a clause.

Look for a verb. A clause must have a verb. A prepositional phrase will not have a verb.

Drop the first word of the phrase or clause in question and look at what is left. If it is a sentence, the group of words is an adverb clause; if it is not, the words form a prepositional phrase.

~~After~~ supper

This does not have a verb. This does not form a sentence. This is a phrase.

~~After~~ they ate supper

This has a verb (ate). This forms a sentence. This is a clause.

## #6 Vss Opener

A very short sentence (vss) is simply a short sentence. It must be short (two to five words), and it must be a sentence (subject + verb and be able to stand alone). It is not a fragment.

Remember that variety in sentence structure is important in good writing. Purposefully adding a very short sentence can help break up the pattern of sentences in a stylish way. It catches the reader's attention. As a result, place it in a spot that needs emphasis.

Robin Hood left.

The blow inflamed him.

King Morton esteemed values.

As an added challenge, include a strong verb so that the very short sentence packs a punch.

# Advanced Sentence Openers

## #F Fragment Opener

A fragment that does not leave the reader hanging and that fits the flow of the paragraph can be dramatic and effective. This opener is often used in fictional writing.

- Timmy saw his dear friend. (sentence)
- Greeting him kindly. (unacceptable fragment)
- “Hello, Johnny!” (acceptable fragment)

## #Q Question Opener

A question is a complete sentence. It must contain a subject and a verb and make sense.

Where could he take a nap?

## #T Transitional Opener

The transitional opener may be an interjection or a transitional word or phrase.

“

Place commas after a transitional expression.

*Meanwhile,* Robin’s men rested near the river.

*Of course,* Dorinda and Maribella lived in the castle.

When an interjection expresses a strong emotion, use an exclamation mark. When an interjection does not express a strong emotion, use a comma.

*Help!* My golden ball has vanished.

*Oh,* I see it now.

List of Common Transitions

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however	first
therefore	next
then	also
thus	moreover
later	hence
now	furthermore
otherwise	henceforth
indeed	likewise

## Decorations

Used sparingly, as an artist might add a splash of bright color to a nature painting, these stylistic techniques daringly or delicately decorate one's prose.

### Alliteration Decoration

Alliteration is using three or more words close together that begin with the same consonant sound. Our ear likes the repetition of sound. The alliterative words may be separated by conjunctions, articles, short pronouns, or prepositions.

Samuel was *seeking some* shady relief from the *sweltering sun*.

*Shady* is not part of the alliteration because it does not have the same initial sound as the other *s* words. It is not the letter that matters but the sound. Thus, *celery* and *sound* are alliterative, but *shady* and *sound* are not.

### Question Decoration

The question may be a rhetorical question, which means the answer is understood and does not need to be given, or it may be a question that the writer answers soon after asking. If a character in the story asks a question of another character, that is simply conversation. The question decoration is directed towards the reader, causing the reader to stop and think.

Someone suddenly appeared on the path. *Who was it?* It was Johnny!

### Conversation/Quotation Decoration

Conversation appears in narrative writing when characters talk.

"You're finally here, Johnny!" exclaimed Timmy.

A quotation appears when the writer uses the exact words that someone else has used.

A quotation includes a well-known expression, words stated by a famous person, or words found in another source. When a quotation is used as a decoration, it does not require a citation, but the source should be included as a lead-in. Punctuate correctly. See page G-27.

As Mark Twain noted, "History may not repeat itself, but it sure does rhyme."

### 3sss Decoration

3sss stands for three short staccato sentences. The 3sss is simply three #6 very short sentences in a row. Using short sentences together, especially among longer sentences, can be a powerful stylistic technique because the short sentences will draw attention to themselves.

A 3sss will have the most impact when the number of words in each of the sentences is the same or decreasing. Increasing patterns have less impact.

4:3:2 Killer bees invaded America. Viciously they attacked. Humans suffered.

3:3:3 Savage bees attacked. Violently they killed. Nobody was spared.

2:2:2 Bees invaded. They marauded. Humans perished.



## Simile/Metaphor Decoration

Both a simile and a metaphor are figures of speech which compare two items that are very different from each other. The well-known simile *her cheeks are like roses* compares cheeks to roses, two very different things. A simile makes the comparison by using the words *like* or *as*. A metaphor does not use *like* or *as*. It simply refers to one thing as if it is another.

The key to recognizing these figures of speech is that they compare unlike things. For example, to say that a cat is like a tiger is a comparison but not a simile.

The ship dove like a swan between them. (simile)

The waves rose mountains high. (metaphor)

## Dramatic Open-Close Decoration

The vss open-close decoration frames a single paragraph. The vss open-close decoration contains two very short sentences two to five words long. One is placed at the beginning of the paragraph, and the other is placed at the end.

Hungry flames roared. (vss open) The farm lay in ashes. (vss close)

Peter sighed. (vss open) Peter had an idea. (vss close)

The mystery was solved! (vss open) The truth was told. (vss close)

The anecdotal open-close decoration frames a composition or essay that includes an introduction and conclusion. An anecdote is a very short story meant to amuse or teach. To use this decoration, begin the introduction with a story to draw in the reader. Revisit the story somewhere in the conclusion.

Anecdotal open (beginning of introduction):

With a bushel of cranberries slung over her shoulder, eight-year-old Jennie Camillo trod through the cranberry bog toward the bushel man who would collect her load. When the infamous photographer Lewis Hine asked her to stop so he could take a picture, she stopped for a brief moment to humor the man. Concernedly Jennie glanced toward her toiling father, who was regarding her stop with annoyance.

Anecdotal close (in the conclusion):

Working during the harvest season, Jennie missed the first six weeks of school. Due to her family's financial struggles, the Camillos were forced to take the whole family to Theodore Budd's bog near Philadelphia before returning home to New Jersey after the harvest.

## Triple Extensions

Classic writers of the past have used duals and triples to convey their meaning most powerfully. The trick is to remember “thrice, never twice.”

### Repeating Words (same word)

*Fearing* for his sheep, *fearing* that the villagers would not arrive in time, and ultimately *fearing* for his own life, Peter screamed, “Help!” as he bolted down the hill.

Never in the field of conflict was *so* much owed by *so* many to *so* few (Churchill).

Villainy is *the matter*; baseness is *the matter*; deception, fraud, conspiracy are *the matter* (Dickens).

With a *common* origin, a *common* literature, a *common* religion and *common* drinks, what is longer needful to the cementing of the two nations together in a permanent bond of brotherhood (Mark Twain)?

### Repeating Clauses

They lived in a land *where* the winter was harsh, *where* food became scarce, and *where* provisions had to be stored.

### Repeating Prepositional Phrases

We have not journeyed all this way *across* the centuries, *across* the oceans, *across* the mountains, *across* the prairies, because we are made of sugar candy (Churchill).

### Repeating -ings

*Gnawing*, *jerking*, and *yanking*, the mouse freed the lion from the thick rope.

The Little Mermaid could be seen *holding* the prince while *kissing* his brow and *stroking* his hair.

### Repeating -ly Adverbs

Robin Hood *cheerfully*, *boldly*, and *fearlessly* led his men.

The mouse *vigorously* gnawed at the tough fibers and *tenaciously* jerked at the rope while he *continuously* assured the lion of escape.

### Repeating Adjectives

The *patient*, *persistent*, and *personable* tortoise determined that at least he would have a chance.

### Repeating Nouns

Peter’s deceptive cries for help finally determined the *attitude*, *behavior*, and *actions* of the village people.

### Repeating Verbs

With all his might, the mouse *gnawed*, *jerked*, and *yanked* at the thick rope.

