



**ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

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**RULES ON GRAMMAR**

**Subject-verb agreement** - Singular subjects need singular verbs and plural subjects need plural verbs.

- If the subject is singular, use is.

**Example:**

1. My brother is a nurse.
2. The man was alone when I saw him.

- When the word who, which, or that is used as a subject in a subordinate clause, we use either the singular or plural form of the verb depending on the number of antecedent.

**Example:**

1. She is the only one among the applicants who has qualified for the said position.
2. She is the only qualified person of the trainees who have applied.

- If the noun is in plural form but is singular in meaning, use the singular form of the verb. (Nouns that show weight, extent, quantity, depth or volume).

**Example:**

1. Twenty kilos of beef was delivered.
2. Two liters of water was given to me in the competition.

- If the subject is in third person and the verb to be used is in present tense, add an -s or -es to the verb.

**Example:**

1. The cat catches the mouse.
2. The car runs on gasoline.

- The indefinite pronoun none can be either singular or plural. It doesn't matter unless there are determinants of number.

**Example:**

1. None of you claims responsibility for the event.
2. None of you claim responsibility for the event.
3. None of the students have done their homework.

(Note: The word „their“ indicates that the verb to be use is plural.)

- Indefinite pronouns such as anyone, everyone, someone, no one, nobody and each are always singular and require singular verbs.

**Example:**

1. Everyone is invited to the event.
2. Nobody said it was easy.
3. Each of the students was given a topic to discuss. (Note: The subject is each, not students.)

- The words all and some are singular or plural depending on what they're referring to (Can it be counted?).

**Example:**

1. Some of his teeth are missing.
2. All of the water is gone.

- The pronouns neither and either are always singular and we use the singular form of the verb even though they seem to be referring to two things.

**Example:**

1. Neither of the clocks is working.
2. Either suit is fine with me.



- If the words or, nor, neither-nor, either-or, not only-but also are used, the verb that we use must agree with nearer subject.

**Example:**

1. Either the slaves or the master is going to prison.
2. Neither the president nor his subordinates are eating in the hotel tonight.

- Words such as glasses, pliers, pants, and scissors are regarded as plural unless the word pair precedes them.

**Example:**

1. My pants are torn.
2. A pair of scissors is in the drawer.

- There are instances when modifiers get in between the subject and its verb, these modifiers does not affect the agreement between the subject and the verb.

**Example:**

1. The mayor, along with his brothers, is finally going to jail.
2. Coy and Jonas, along with Mon, are studying for the exam.

- Collective nouns require a singular verb when the group is thought of as a unit, but it requires a plural verb when the individuals composing the group are thought of acting as separately.

**Example:**

1. The committee was discussing the business proposal.
2. The herd was found on top of the hill.
3. Members of the committee have placed their votes.

- The pronoun "you", requires a plural verb regardless of number.

**Example:**

1. You are the best.
2. All of you are exempted from taking the finals.

- If the words Both-And join the parts of a compound subject, the verb required is plural.

**Example:**

1. Both the book and magazine are inside the drawer.
2. Both the pen and the pencil are on my desk.

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- Expressions such as half of, a part of, a percentage of, a majority of are sometimes singular and sometimes plural, depending on the meaning. Mathematical operations are always expressed as singular and require singular verbs.

Fractions take a singular verb if the OF-PHRASE that follows it is singular!

**Example:**

1. Some of my classmates are angry.
2. Two times three is six.
3. One fifth of the class is taking the finals
4. One third of the troops were missing in action.

- The phrase the number requires a singular verb and the phrase a number requires a plural verb.

**Example:**

1. The number of students who failed is thirty.
2. A number of students have passed the test.

- To indicate possession (who owns) of a singular noun, we add an -'s...
- To indicate possession of a plural noun but ending in -s, we add an ' only...

**Example:**

1. This is John's Money.
2. These are the dogs' collars.

**Points to Remember:**

- Make sure that he subject agrees with the verb. Don't be distracted with the words in between them.
- Only the subject will agree with the verb.
- Be sure that a pronoun, a participial phrase, or an appositive refers clearly to the proper subject.

IRREGULAR VERBS		
Basic Form	Past Tense	Past Participle
Bear (to carry)	Bore	Borne
Beat	Beat	Beaten or Beat
Be	Was	Been
Begin	Began	Begun
Bet	Bet	Bet
Bit	Bitten	Bitten
Choose	Chose	Chosen
Drink	Drank	Drunk
Forgive	Forgave	Forgiven
Go	Went	Gone
Know	Knew	Known
Mistake	Mistook	Mistaken
Ring	Rang	Rung
Swear	Swore	Sworn



## COMMON GRAMMAR ERRORS

### 1. Run-on Sentence

A run-on sentence is a sentence where two or more independent clauses are joined without proper conjunctions or punctuations.

- ✗ **Wrong:** My duty was very tiring I extended until 4 am.
- ✓ **Correct:** My duty was very tiring. I extended until 4 am.

### 2. Fragmented Sentences

A sentence fragment is simply a phrase with incomplete thought.

- ✗ **Wrong:** Many people standing dangerously close to the edge of the cliff.
- ✓ **Correct:** Many people were standing dangerously close to the edge of the cliff.

### 3. Comparative versus Superlative case

Do not use the superlative form of the verb when comparing two persons or things.

- ✗ **Wrong:** The scientists are searching for the best solutions.
- ✓ **Correct:** The scientists are searching for the best solution.

### 4. Error in the case of a noun or pronoun

Case problems involve the use of personal pronouns, which are in the nominative case (I, he, she, we, they, who) when they are used as subjects or predicate nominatives, and in the objective case (me, him, her, us, them, whom) when they are used as direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions.

- ✗ **Wrong:** I can have coffee or tea. I wonder which is best.
- ✓ **Correct:** I can have coffee or tea. I wonder which is better.
- ✗ **Wrong:** Between you and I, this job is a piece of cake.
- ✓ **Correct:** Between you and me, this job is a piece of cake.

### 5. Dangling modifiers

A dangling modifier occurs when a noun being modified is not placed next to its modifier.

- ✗ **Wrong:** Having climbed Mt. Kanlaon, Mt. Banahaw is more scenic.
- ✓ **Correct:** Having climbed Mt. Kanlaon, I find Mt. Banahaw more scenic.

### 6. Lack of Parallelism

Words or phrases in a series should be similar in form.

- ✗ **Wrong:** We practiced reloading, disarming and how to shoot.

- ✓ **Correct:** We practiced reloading, disarming and shooting.

### 7. Use of Capital Letters

All proper nouns should be capitalized including titles of movies, songs, names, etc.

- ✗ **Wrong:** I love listening to Michael Buble's "always on my mind."
- ✓ **Correct:** I love listening to Michael Buble's "Always on my mind."

## COMMON PUNCTUATION MARKS AND THEIR USES:

### 1. COMMA (,)

- To separate items in a series.  
**Example:** Our itinerary included Rome, London and Madrid.
- Use before and, but, or, nor, for, so and yet when they join independent clauses (unless the clauses are short.)  
**Example:** The story gets off to a slow start, but it gets exciting toward the end.
- To set off nonessential clauses and phrases.  
**Example:** My father, who started this company, really knows his stuff.
- Use after introductory elements.  
**Example:** Well, how do you do?  
Before you leave, turn off the lights.
- To set off an expression that interrupts a sentence.  
**Example:** The article in The Herald, our local paper, is about writing skills. Cabs in New York, I'm certain, obey the speed limit.
- To separate items in dates and addresses, after the salutation and closing of a letter, and after a name followed by a title.  
**Example:** January 12, 2012  
New York, NY  
Dear Shirley,  
Michael Brown, Ph. D.

### 2. APOSTROPHE (')

- To form the possessive case of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and an S.  
**Example:** Bob's car.
- If the addition of an "s" produces an awkward sound, add only the apostrophe. Usually, this is when there is already a double "s" sound.  
**Example:** Moses'  
for old times' sake  
for goodness' sake

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- To form the possessive case of a plural noun, add an apostrophe after the s.  
**Example:** girls' teams
- If the plural form of the word does not end in s, add an apostrophe and ad s.  
**Example:** women's team
- To show where letters have been omitted in a contraction.  
**Example:** can't = cannot  
it's = it is

### 3. SEMICOLON (;)

- Use between independent clauses not joined by and, but, nor, for, yet and so.  
**Example:** Read what you've written; don't just pass it on.
- Use between independent clauses joined by such words as for example, besides, nevertheless, etc.  
**Example:** I think he's right; however, it's difficult to know.
- Use between items in a series if the items contain commas.  
**Example:** Winners in the competition are Bill, first place; Amy, second place; and Jeff, third place.

### 4. COLON (:)

- Use to mean "note what follows."  
**Example:** When you go to training, take these items: paper, pencil and an alert mind.
- Use before a long, formal statement or quotation.

### 5. HYPHEN (-)

- Use to divide a word at the end of a line.  
**Example:** If you are not sure where to hyphenate a word, look it up in the dictionary.
- Hyphenate a compound adjective when it precedes the word it modifies.  
**Example:** fast-moving train  
long-distance runner

### 6. DASH (—)

- Use to indicate an abrupt break in thought.  
**Example:** The truth is — and you probably know it — we can't do without you.
- Use to mean namely, in other words, or that is before an explanation.  
**Example:** It was a close call — if he had been in a worse mood, I don't think I'd still be here.

### 7. QUOTATION MARKS ("")

- Put periods and commas inside quotes.

- Put colons and semicolons outside quotes.
- Vary placement of exclamation and question marks according to meaning.

### 8. QUESTION MARK (?)

- Use when asking a query.  
**Example:** What is your name?

### 9. PERIOD (.)

- Use only for a declarative sentence.  
**Example:** I am a man.

### 10. EXCLAMATION POINT (!)

- Use when using an exclamatory sentence or to denote emotions.  
**Example:** Enough!

## PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are used to express a number of relationships, including time, location, manner, means, quantity, purpose, and state or condition. Common errors in prepositions occur due to the fact that most prepositions can be used interchangeably. To avoid this, it is best to familiarize yourself with the common prepositions and the common phrases in which they are being used.

USE	PREPOSITION	EXAMPLE
TIME	about	about noon (approximately)
	after	after the review after dinner
	at	at three o' clock
	by	by noon (no later than)
	for	for thirty minutes (duration)
	from	from Sunday to Saturday
	in	in the morning in spring in ten minutes (at the end of) in time (early enough)
	of	a quarter of three (15 minutes before)
	on	on Friday (day of the week) on May 8 (date) on time (punctual)
	past	A quarter past three (15 minutes after)
to	A quarter to three (15 minutes before)	

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PLACE OR DIRECTION	around	It's just around the corner
	at	She's at home. Coy was at the restaurant.
	down	They lived down the hill.
	from	We emigrated from Pampanga in 1991. The school is one kilometer from here.
	in	He lives in a kariton. We waited in the car.
	inside	Put it inside this box
	on	We sat on the bench.
	through	We walked through the glass tunnel at Manila Ocean Park.
	to	Give it to me. He went to Manila.
	up	He walked up the stairs.
	with	He went with her.
	by	He was hit by a bat He came by plane He got there by walking.
	from	His success results from careful planning.
	in	He takes pleasure in it. The room was in chaos.
	on	They live on rice and salt. I swear it on my word of honor.
with	He chased the thief with a bolo. The Chinese eat their food with chopstick.	
MEANS	at	My friend is at home.
	by	They are by themselves. (alone)
	in	She was in a state of shock.
	on	He is on duty (scheduled work).
	for	I mistook you for someone else.
	as	I see you as a good friend.
STATE OR CONDITION	for	We drove for 30 minutes just to get here. We bought it for ten pesos.
	by	We bought them by crates.

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## COMMON MISUSED WORDS/PHRASES:

### 1. LIE, LAY

- **LIE** is an intransitive verb meaning to recline or rest on a surface. Its principal parts are *lie, lay, lain*. **LAY** is a transitive verb meaning to put or place. Its principal parts are *lay, laid*.

**Example:** Chickens lay eggs.

I lie down when I am tired.

### 2. SET, SIT

- **SET** is a transitive verb meaning to put or to place. Its principal parts are *set, set, set*.
- **SIT** is an intransitive verb meaning to be seated. Its principal parts are *sit, sat, sat*.

**Example:** She set the dough in a warm corner of the kitchen.

The cat sat in the warmest part of the room.

### 3. WHO, WHICH, THAT

- Do not use **WHICH** to refer to persons. Use **WHO** instead.

**Example:** I just saw a boy who was wearing a yellow banana costume.

Where is the book that I was reading?

- **THAT**, though generally used to refer to things, may used to refer to a group or class of people.

**Example:** I have to go to math next, which is my hardest class.

### 4. ACCEPT, EXCEPT

- **ACCEPT** is a verb meaning to receive. **EXCEPT** is usually a preposition meaning excluding.

**Example:** I will accept all the packages except that one.

### 5. AFFECT, EFFECT

- **AFFECT** is usually a verb meaning to influence. **EFFECT** is usually a noun meaning result; it can also be a verb meaning to bring about.

**Example:** The drug did not affect the disease, and it had several adverse side effects.

### 6. ALLUSION, ILLUSION

- An **ALLUSION** is an indirect reference. An **ILLUSION** is a misconception or false impression.

**Example:** Did you catch my allusion to Shakespeare?

Mirrors give the illusion of depth.

### 7. CAPITAL, CAPITOL

- **CAPITAL** refers to a city or may also refer to wealth or resources. **CAPITOL** to a building where lawmakers meet.



**Example:** The *capitol* has undergone extensive renovations. The residents of the state capital protested the development plans.

**8. ELICIT, ILLICIT**

- **ELICIT** is a verb meaning to bring out or to evoke. **ILLICIT** is an adjective meaning unlawful.

**Example:** The reporter was unable to elicit information from the police about illicit drug traffic.

**9. CLIMACTIC, CLIMATIC**

- **CLIMACTIC** is derived from climax, the point of greatest intensity in a serious or progression of events. **CLIMATIC** is derived from climate, it refers to meteorological conditions.

**Example:** The climactic period in the dinosaurs' reign was reached just before severe climatic conditions brought on the ice age.

**10. EMIGRATE FROM, IMMIGRATE TO**

- **EMIGRATE** means to leave one country to region settle in another.
- **Emigrate** begins with the letter E, as does Exit. When you emigrate, you exit a country.
- **Immigrate** begins with the letter I, as does In. When you immigrate, you go into a country.

**Example:** In 1900, my grandfather emigrated from Russia.  
Many immigrate to the US to find work.

**11. PRINCIPLE, PRINCIPAL**

- **PRINCIPAL** is a noun meaning the head of a scholar or an organization or a sum of money. **PRINCIPLE** is a noun meaning a basic truth or law.

**Example:** The principal taught us many important life principles.

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