

Wark's Helpful Hints and Editor/Instructor Preferences:
Common Grammatical Errors

This is a general list of common grammatical errors. When you are completing your written assignments please keep these in mind. In order to express yourself well, your writing should be clear and free of any errors. While content is of the utmost priority in the assignment of grades, incorrect grammar can also decrease your score. Please see your professor or the staff at the Writing Center for help.

Rules:

1. **Non-agreement:** Watch for singular vs. plural nouns and the corresponding verbs and pronouns.

ex 1. (Incorrect) He go to the store.
ex 2. (Correct) He goes to the store.

ex 1. (Incorrect) The business has many customers they serve.
ex 2. (Correct) The business has many customers it serves.
2. **Misspellings/Lack of Proofreading:** Please spell-check your documents and also proofread for errors. Many wordprocessors have grammar-checking capabilities as well as the basic spell checking. Many errors such as those below will not be picked up by spell checking.

ex 1. (Incorrect) The entrepreneur had an good idea.
ex 2. (Correct) The entrepreneur had a good idea.

ex 1. Watch out to, too, and two
for
ex 2. homonyms their, there, they're, etc.
3. **Use of Colons (:):** A full sentence precedes a colon. This sentence describes the list of items that will follow the colon. The *italicized words* indicate a fragment.

ex 1. (Incorrect) *Nike's products:* athletic shoes, equipment, and apparel.
ex 2. (Correct) Nike's products include the following: athletic shoes, equipment, and apparel.
4. **Use of Semi-colons (;):** A semi-colon joins two complete sentences that could stand alone.

ex. (Correct) The tobacco industry operates under heavy regulations; advertising by this industry is the most affected area.
5. **Run-on Sentences:** Often run-on sentences are plagued by the incorrect use of commas, colons, and semi-colons.

ex 1. (Incorrect) The business sold clothing it was well made.
ex 2. (Correct) The business sold clothing that was well made.
Or
ex 3. (Correct) The business sold clothing; it was well made.

Wark's grammar hints

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6. Sentence Fragments:

Fragments often do not have both a subject and a predicate (i.e. a noun and a verb).

ex 1.

(Incorrect) US AIR, known for its many flights.

ex 2.

(Correct) US AIR is known for its many flights.

Or

ex 3.

(Correct) US AIR, known for its many flights, recently suffered financial losses.

7. Do not end a sentence with a preposition!

Some examples of prepositions follow: of, with, to, for, above, etc.

ex 1.

(Incorrect) He did not have a source for his clients to refer to.

ex 2.

(Correct) He did not have a source for his clients' reference.

Or

ex 3.

(Correct) He did not have a referral source for his clients.

8. Use apostrophes to indicate Possession:

If you absolutely insist on using apostrophes, then know that the apostrophe means one of the following two things.

1.

It signifies possession.

ex 1.

It was Tommy's idea.

ex 2.

The company's profits increased this year.

2.

It indicates a missing letter or letters.

ex 1.

It's = It is

ex 2.

There's = There is

ex 3.

You're = You are

3.

Plurals do NOT have apostrophes.

ex 1.

(Incorrect) We saw many example's.

ex 2.

(Correct) We saw many examples.

9. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence.

(Incorrect): 40% of people agree with the rule.

(Correct): Forty percent of people agree with the rule.

OR People agree with this rule 40% of the time.

Editor/Instructor Preferences:

10. Insert a comma after the introductory prepositional phrase in a sentence.

(Correct) In the morning, I teach my classes.

(Incorrect) In the morning I teach my classes.

11. Avoid using contractions:

Use should not instead of shouldn't.

12. Use of "Who" versus "That":

"Who" should be used when referring to people!