

## Grammar Refresher: Do's and Don'ts

*Run spell and grammar check.*

1. Put journal article titles and other short works: "An Evaluation of Gender Use of Technology."
2. Put titles of book, journals, and other longer works, in italics: *Technology and Society*, *Proceedings of the 49th ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education*.
3. Put commas, periods, and other punctuation marks *inside* quotations marks: "Stardust," not "Stardust"; "The Birthmark," not "The Birthmark".
4. Put a comma between independent clauses: "I went to the store, and I bought a quart of milk."
5. Put a comma after a subordinate clause: "Since I was out of milk, I went to the store."

"Dependent clauses, like the name suggests, rely on other elements in a sentence. Independent clauses, on the other hand, can stand alone."

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/independent-dependent-clauses-subordination-coordination.html>

6. Don't put a comma between compound phrases: I went to the store and bought a quart of milk."
7. Put a comma before all but the last item in a series: "I bought milk, bread, and cheese" not "I bought milk, bread and cheese."

Called "Oxford Comma."

"The Oxford (or serial) comma is the final comma in a list of things."

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/what-is-the-oxford-comma-and-why-do-people-care-so-much-about-it/>

In THIS class...we use the Oxford Comma

8. Use a semi-colon between two independent clauses not joined by a conjunction: "Injustice is easy to bear; what stings is justice."
9. Avoid a "comma splice" by using a semi-colon:  
not "I learned all the rules and regulations, however, I never really mastered the game" but  
"I learned all the rules and regulations; however, I never really mastered the game."
10. Use a colon after an independent clause to call attention to the words that follow: "My roommate is guilty of two of the deadly sins: sloth and gluttony."
11. Use a hyphen between two words that modify another word:  
"My cousin is a well-known pianist."
12. Remember that "its" means possessive:  
"The dog chased its tail." "It's" means "it is": "I think it's going to rain."
13. "Imply" means that something is suggested: "He implied that he was short of cash." "Infer" means that you have to deduce something. "I inferred that he was broke when he didn't pick up the check."
14. Don't use "this" as the subject of a sentence; always follow it with a noun. "This device was new to film musicals." Not "This was new to film musicals."

15. Use “who” not “that” when referring to people: “The man who came to dinner” not “The man that came to dinner.”
16. “That” is the restrictive or defining pronoun and should not be preceded by a comma: The house that is on fire is mine.”
17. “Which” is the nonrestrictive, non-defining pronoun and should be set off by commas. The house, which I bought for very little money, is on fire.”
18. Use “like” before nouns and pronouns: “There’s nobody like you.”
19. Use “as” before phrases and clauses: “Characters simply burst into song **as** they do in a stage musical” not “like they do in a stage musical.
20. One thing is “different from” another thing--not “different than.” “Bocce is different from bowling” not “Bocce is different than bowling.”
21. “Than” is comparative: “Bocce is more difficult than bowling.”
22. You “persuade to” and are “convinced that.”  
“I persuaded her to go fishing with me even though she was convinced that she wouldn’t catch anything.”
23. Don’t use nouns as verbs (e.g. “This course had an impact on me” not “This course impacted me”). AND, don’t “-ing” a noun.
24. Try to avoid “-ize” words that turn adjectives and nouns into verbs:  
“finalize,” “prioritize,” “agendize,” etc.
25. “Farther” applies to *distance*; “further” applies to time.  
“I’m driving farther tomorrow”; “I’m pursuing this idea further.”
26. “Presently” means “in the near future” not “at the present time.”  
“Currently” means “at the present time.”
27. Use “more than” rather than “over”:  
“She lost more than thirty dollars” not “She lost over thirty dollars.”
28. Maintain consistent verb tense throughout a piece of writing; don’t shift from past to present tense.
29. Spell out numbers of one or two words (“six,” “twenty-one”) as well as any number that begins a sentence: “One hundred fifty people attended the performance.”
30. Do NOT write in the present tense unless you are asked to write an opinion. You are “the researcher,” “the author.”  
If you MUST use “I” or “me” to complete a sentence and aren’t sure which to use:  
Complete the sentence: “Jill is bigger than I (am)” not “Jill is bigger than me (am).”
31. “Hopefully” means “with hope” not “I hope” or “It is hoped.”
32. “Loan” is a noun; “lend” is a verb: “Will you give me a loan”; “Will you lend me twenty dollars?”
33. Avoid contractions. NOT: “don’t use them.” BUT: “do not use them.”

## Common Word Issues:

- They're vs. Their vs. There  
*They are; ownership; location*
- Affect vs. Effect  
*Verb; noun*
- Except vs. Accept  
*Exception; receive*
- Discreet vs. Discrete  
*private; distinct or separate*
- Then vs. than  
*timeline; comparison*
- Your vs. You're  
*ownership (possessive); You are*
- To vs. Two vs. Too  
*word used before a noun or verb; number; also*
- Peek vs. Peak vs. Pique  
*Look; point; provoke*
- Cite vs. Site  
*quote; location*
- Who vs. That  
*Person; object*
- Who vs. Whom vs. Whose vs. Who's  
*Living pronoun; recipient of something; ownership; who is*
- Alot vs. A lot vs. Allot  
*not a word; many things; set aside*
- Into vs. In to  
*Movement; not movement*
- Lose vs. Loose  
*unable to find; not tight*
- Assure vs. Insure vs. Ensure  
*promise; protect against risk; make certain*
- Compliment vs. Complement  
*expression of praise; completes*
- En Dash vs. Em Dash  
*time span; set off quotation sources*
- Between vs. Among  
*two items; more than two*
- Comparisons: -er, -est  
*do not include "more" in front of -er words (NOT more better)  
and give what the -er or -est is comparing itself to: better than you*
- i.e. vs. e.g.  
*in other words; for example*

- Plurals

*A business is singular, not plural*

*Use of an apostrophe defines plural in possessive:*

*All of the student's computers were stolen. Is that more than one student meaning more than one computer? If so: students'*

- Gender Neutral

*He his*

*She hers*

*Use "they" to remain neutral*

Taken from Philip Furia, used with permission

Taken from <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/common-grammar-mistakes-list>

Taken from <http://mentalfloss.com/article/65217/20-word-usage-mistakes-even-smart-people-make>