

GRAMMAR RULES

Comma Rules

1. **Commas are used to separate two independent clauses (complete thoughts) joined by a FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).**
Example: Bruce usually felt at home in the wilderness, yet tonight he was afraid.
2. **Commas are used after introductory clauses beginning with words like *if, when, whenever, because, after, before, although, while*, or other conjunctions.**
Example: Whenever danger threatens, small animals hide in their burrows.
3. **Commas are used after long introductory phrases or after two or more introductory phrases.**
Example: At the back of the restaurant, there is a private room for parties
Example: In the middle of the night at the stroke of twelve, the man suddenly awoke.
4. **Commas are used to separate three or more items in a list.**
5. **Commas are used to separate nonessential information or words.**
Example: The children, who weren't very happy, were in the corner alone.
Example: Mary, however, was very pleased with herself.
6. **Commas are used to separate two or more words (adjectives) describing a word that follows.**

Example: It was a hot, dreary day in the old, ugly town of Redbud. Rule of thumb: if you can reverse the adjectives and put "and" between them, then you need a comma. For example old-fashioned living room. You couldn't say *living and old-fashioned* room....so you don't need a comma before old-fashioned and living room.

Apostrophe Rules

1. **Use apostrophes to take the place of missing letters or numbers**
Example: we'd like to invite them to visit next weekend if they're available.
Example: The '98 winner of the scholarship is from our high school.
2. **Use apostrophes to show possession by a person or thing. Add an apostrophe (') when the word already has an s. Add an apostrophe s ('s) when the word does not have an s.**
3. **The word it's with an apostrophe means "it is" The word its with no apostrophe means "belonging to it"**

Title Rules

1. **The titles of all long works such as plays, novels, albums, and movies are underlined. Underlining is the same thing as putting something in italics.**
2. **The titles of all short works such as poems, songs, essays, and short stories should be put in quotation marks**

Capitalization Rules

1. **The first word in a sentence is always capitalized**
2. **The titles of movies, plays, books, stories, magazines, and newspapers, and songs also begin with capitals**
3. **All other words in titles are capitalized except certain short words such as a, an, the, and, but, or, for, of, in at, on, from, to and into UNLESS THEY ARE THE FIRST OR LAST WORD IN THE TITLE**
4. **Proper nouns are capitalized (names, places, and holidays).**
5. **Titles are capitalized when they appear before a name. Titles are not capitalized when they do not have a name except for very important titles such as President, King, and Queen.**
6. **Do not capitalize the names of seasons, summer, spring, fall, and winter unless they are personified.**
7. **Do not capitalize directions: north, south, east west, unless they are part of the name of a place or they are the name of the place.**
8. **Capitalize family member titles such as mother, father, aunt, and uncle when they take the place of a name.**
9. **Adjectives are capitalized if they come from a proper noun, ie Japanese, Gregorian, Canadian.**

Subject Verb Agreement Rules

1. **When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by AND, use a plural verb.**
Example: She and her friend are at the fair.
2. **The words each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, everything, anybody, anyone, nobody, nothing, somebody, someone and no one are singular and require a singular verb.**
Example : Each of these hot dogs is juicy. Example : Everybody knows Mr. Jones

3. The word "they" is plural, it cannot be used to replace a singular subject.

Example: If a student wants to go home, they should contact their parents. WRONG

Example: If a student wants to go home, he should contact his parents. RIGHT

Example: If a student wants to go home, he or she should contact his or her parents. RIGHT

Fragments

1. A fragment is an incomplete thought that cannot stand alone

Example: After the storm

2. A fragment may lack a subject or a verb

Example: Jack the boy.

Example: Stood alone in the corner.

Run-Ons

1. A run-on contains two or more complete sentences written as one

2. A run-on may have a comma splice. A comma splice occurs when two sentences are joined with a comma but they lack a FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). A comma splice also occurs when a comma is used where a period or a semicolon should go.

Example: There was a mistake in our bill, the server took care of it. WRONG

Example: There was a mistake in our bill, so the server took care of it. RIGHT

Example: There was a mistake in our bill. The server took care of it. RIGHT

Example: There was a mistake in our bill; the server took care of it. RIGHT

Quote Rules

1. A direct quote uses the exact words someone has used. These words go between quotation marks.

Example: Mark said, "The earth is becoming overpopulated."

2. The introduction to a quote is set apart with commas.

Example: Mark said,

Jamie replied,

Margaret Yelled,

3. An indirect quote is usually introduced by the word *that*. It does not require quotes

Example: Mark said that the earth is becoming overpopulated.

4. A period or a comma that punctuates the quote is always placed inside the quotation mark.

5. If the quoted words are an exclamation, the exclamation mark belongs inside the quotation mark

Example: "Safe!" shouted the umpire.

6. If the quoted words ask a question, the question mark goes inside the quotes.

Example: "Do you know what time it is?" asked Dean.

7. If the question is not part of the quote, the question mark goes outside of the quotes.

Example: Did he really say, "I had absolutely nothing to do with it"?

Semicolon Rules

1. Semicolons are used in place of the word *and* to join two sentences.

Example: Bill searched in the woods; I looked along the riverbank

2. Semicolons are used before certain joining words (*however, nevertheless, therefore, moreover, furthermore, subsequently, in fact and for example*) when they join two sentences.

Example: The Weather Channel says it's going to rain; however, there's a possibility that we'll have a snowstorm if it gets cold enough.

3. Notice that a semicolon goes before the joining word but a comma goes after it.

Colon Rules

1. Colons are used before a list in a sentence especially when you see *these, the following, or as follows*

EXAMPLE: Denise has lived in these three cities: Raleigh, Durham, and Wilmington.

2. Do not use a colon after a verb or preposition, even if it introduces a list.

EXAMPLE: Denise ordered her pizzas with: green peppers, onions, and pepperoni. WRONG

3. Use a colon to join two closely related sentences

Example: Of course she's concerned about the child: She's his mother.