

GRAMMAR BASICS

See Appendix A Guides 1-50 in your text (pages A-2 to A-18)

Note: This is not a complete grammar course. For specific grammar questions, consult a grammar guide.

1. Sentences

Sentences are the expression of a complete idea. A complete sentence must have a subject and a predicate.

Subject	=	noun or pronoun
Predicate	=	verb or verb phrase

2. Dependent and independent clauses

3. Run-on and comma-splice sentences (*see Guides 2 and 3, pages A-2 and A-3*)

4. Punctuation marks (*see Guides 21-38, pages A-9 to A-33*)

Punctuation marks help the reader understand what the writer is trying to say. They tell the reader when to accelerate, when to slow down, when to stop, and what to expect.

periods

- after a complete sentence
- after a command
- inside a quotation mark that ends a sentence
- after most abbreviations (if the abbreviation comes at the end of a sentence, do not add another period)
- after an initial
- after each Roman numeral, letter, or number in an outline

commas

- separate items in a series
- set off interrupting words
- set off introductory words and phrases
- separate parts of a compound sentence
- set off a direct quotation
- separate the parts of an address

apostrophes

- to show possession (ownership)
 - singular nouns *not* ending in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*
 - singular nouns ending in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*
 - plural nouns ending in *s*, add an apostrophe after the *s*
 - plural nouns *not* ending in *s*, add an apostrophe and an *s*
 - to show plural forms
 - use an apostrophe and *s* to show the plural of a letter

use an apostrophe and *s* to show the plural of a number
use an apostrophe and *s* to show the plural of a word referred to as
a word
to show where a letter or number has been omitted
to show that letters have been left out of contractions
to show that numbers have been left out of a date

quotation marks

to set off a speaker's exact words
to set off the titles of short works such as poems, essays, songs, short
stories, and magazine articles
use single quotation marks to set off quoted material or the titles of short
works within a quotation enclosed by double quotation marks
to set off a definition

question marks

after a question
inside of closing quotation marks if it *is* part of the quotation
outside of the closing quotation marks if it *is not* part of the quotation

exclamation marks

after an exclamatory sentence

colons

before a list
to separate two independent clauses when the second clause
restates or explains the first clause

semicolons

between closely related independent clauses
between main clauses when the coordinating conjunction has been
left out
to join independent clauses when one or both clauses contain a
comma
between main clauses connected to words such as *however*,
nevertheless, *moreover*, *for example*, and *consequently*

parenthesis

to enclose additional information
to enclose numbers or letters

hyphen (one -)

at the end of a line when you must break up a word onto two lines
in certain compound nouns (great-grandmother)
in fractions and compound numbers (twenty-one to ninety-nine)

dashes (two --)

to show a sudden change of thought
before a summary of what is stated in the sentence

ellipsis

to show that you have deleted words or sentences from a passage
you are quoting
to show a pause or interruption

brackets

to enclose a comment that interrupts a direct quotation

5. Capitalization (*see Guides 39–46, pages A-16 and A-17*)

Capitalize the first word of:

a sentence

a complete sentence after a colon

a quotation, if it is a complete sentence

a line of poetry

the greeting and complimentary close of a letter

the first word of each item in an outline

Numbers (*see Guides 47–50, pages A-17 and A-18*)