

Reference: Grammar/Punctuation

Four Key Classes of Words: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs

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Four Key Classes of Words: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs

NOUNS

Nouns name people, places, things, ideas, or qualities.

— A **common noun** names any of a class of people, places, or things.

artist, judge, building, event, city

— A **proper noun** (always capitalized) names a *particular* person, place, or thing.

Pablo Picasso, Judge Roy Bean, Chinook Centre, Mardi Gras, Paris

— A **mass noun** names a quantity that is not countable.

time, dust, work, gold

— A **collective noun** names a group of people, places, or things thought of as a unit.

committee, class, navy, band, family

— An **abstract noun** names something intangible—an idea or quality.

love, hate, justice, anger, fear, prejudice

VERBS

Verbs express action or states of being.

— **verb as action**

He *ran* for the train. // She *calculates* the bill. // We'll *see* the movie.

— **verb as state of being**

Elizabeth *became* a queen. // I *am* thrilled. // This is *to be* my second trip.

— **A main verb communicates the principal action** in a sentence or clause.

This book *contains* a discussion of ancient myths.

— A main verb is a **linking verb when it is followed by a subject complement**, a word or phrase that defines or describes the subject.

Carbon disulfide *smells* bad. [subject = Carbon disulfide // adjective describing (i.e. complementing) subject = bad // verb that links subject and its description = *smells*]

Some commonly used linking verbs: *become, seem, appear, believe, grow, remain, prove, smell, taste, feel, turn.*

— An **auxiliary verb**, such as *be* or *have*, combines with a main verb to form a **verb phrase**. Auxiliary verbs indicate different qualities of actions—for instance, tense.

The game *has* *started*. [auxiliary verb = has // main verb = *started*]

The game *will* *start*. [auxiliary verb = will // main verb = *start*]

The game *would have* *started*. [auxiliary verbs = would have // main verb = *started*]

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that modify nouns or pronouns.

— A **descriptive adjective** names a quality of the noun or pronoun to which it refers.

We bought a *comfortable* mattress.
[*comfortable* = adjective modifying noun “mattress”]

I ordered a *chocolate* soda, and she had a *butterscotch* sundae.
[*chocolate* and *butterscotch* = adjectives modifying nouns “soda” and “sundae” respectively]

He is *small*. [*small* = adjective (in this case, a subject complement) modifying “He”]

— Some adjectives are formed from common nouns (e.g. *friend* → *friendly*) or from verbs (e.g. *agree* → *agreeable*). Others, called **proper adjectives**, are formed from proper nouns.

There is a strong *Canadian* element in the American entertainment industry.

The *Shakespearean* sonnet is one of my favorite poetic forms.

— Two or more words may be combined (sometimes with a hyphen, sometimes without) to form a **compound adjective** (e.g. *foreign born*, *well-behaved*)

— Another class of adjectives is composed of words like articles, pronouns, and numbers. When these words are used to modify nouns, they are said to be adjectival (“adjectival” = adjectival form of the noun *adjective!*).

We watched *the* boy pick up *a* seashell. [*the* and *a* = articles serving as adjectives]

Their lives depended on *our* skills. [*Their* and *our* = pronouns serving as adjectives]

I bought *one* tie, and she bought *two* scarves. [*one* and *two* = numbers serving as adjectives]

ADVERBS

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or complete phrases, clauses, or sentences. They answer questions like *How? Why? Where? When? To what extent? or To what degree?*

He walked *hesitantly* toward the front of the room. [*hesitantly* modifying verb “walked”]

It seems *so* long since we met *here yesterday*. [*so* modifying adjective “long” // *here yesterday* modifying “met”]

Unfortunately, the program didn’t run. [*Unfortunately* modifying independent clause “the program didn’t run”]

— **Interrogative adverbs**—the words *how*, *when*, *why*, and *where*—introduce questions.

Why did the lights suddenly go out?

Where have you left the documents?

How do you get your hair to look like that?

— **Conjunctive adverbs** join and relate independent clauses. Some of the most commonly used conjunctive (or linking) adverbs are the following:

<i>accordingly</i>	<i>furthermore</i>	<i>meanwhile</i>	<i>similarly</i>	<i>also</i>	<i>incidentally</i>
<i>hence</i>	<i>moreover</i>	<i>still</i>	<i>anyway</i>	<i>besides</i>	<i>next</i>
<i>thereafter</i>	<i>undoubtedly</i>	<i>otherwise</i>	<i>likewise</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>thus</i>
<i>now</i>	<i>instead</i>	<i>consequently</i>	<i>therefore</i>	<i>nonetheless</i>	<i>indeed</i>
<i>certainly</i>					

#1 – Subjects and Predicates

— Every sentence has two main parts, a **subject** and a **predicate**.

— The **subject** includes all the words that tell who or what the sentence is about.

The car / sped through the intersection.

Six geese / honked loudly.

My brother / feels as though no one cares.

— The **predicate** includes all the words that state the action or condition (i.e. how it *is* or *exists*) of the subject.

The car / **sped through the intersection.** [action]

Six geese / **honked loudly.** [action]

My brother / **feels as though no one cares.** [condition]

Exercises – Subjects and Predicates

A. In each of the following sentences, underline the subject and circle the predicate.

1. Birds fly.
2. The wind blew furiously.
3. Wood Buffalo is a large national park.
4. This letter came to the post office yesterday.
5. They are happy to rent a cabin in the Rockies every summer.

B. Write a complete, correct sentence by adding a predicate to each subject.

1. The best music on the radio _____.
2. The books on the shelf _____.
3. All of the students _____.
4. Each of the girls _____.
5. You _____.

C. Write a complete, correct sentence by adding a subject to each predicate.

1. _____ is my favorite band.

2. _____ traveled day and night.
3. _____ came to our door yesterday.
4. _____ is an important character trait.
5. _____ , joyfully screaming, met us there.

Special note:

Later in this series of writing-skills handouts, you'll be focusing closely on the concept of the sentence fragment, a common writing fault. For now, however, here's a quick heads-up about it. **A sentence fragment is a unit of writing that looks like but is not really a sentence because it lacks either a subject or a predicate.** It begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, but because it is missing one of these indispensable parts, the subject or the predicate, it is only a fragment of an otherwise complete sentence.

Each of the following units is a sentence fragment:

- The best music on the radio.
- The books on the shelf.
- My favorite band.
- Having important character traits.
- Traveled day and night.

Quiz #1 – Subjects and Predicates

A. In each of the following sentences, underline the subject and circle the predicate.

1. Shakespeare wrote many magnificent plays.
2. My dog likes to eat cereal for breakfast.
3. Cotton-candy-flavored potato chips never really caught on.
4. The Appalachian Mountains rose up suddenly before us.
5. Her brightly blue, saucer-sized eyes gazed sadly back at me.
6. The flowers, the place settings, and the background music were all arranged by Stefano.
7. Thirty-seven plays are attributed to Shakespeare.
8. John and Paul saw the Appalachian Mountains suddenly rising and shining before them.
9. Gazing sadly back at me were her brightly blue, saucer-sized eyes.
10. Stefano carefully arranged the flowers and place settings, and chose the perfect background music.

B. Complete the following definition.

A sentence fragment, though it appears to be a complete sentence, is actually *incomplete* because it lacks

_____.

C. For the following units, underline each complete sentence, and circle each sentence fragment.

1. Rodents scurried.
2. Scurrying rodents.
3. The screeching of tires followed by the crashing of metal and the shattering of glass.
4. You can't!
5. The relentlessly turning seasons and the ceaselessly lapping waves.

6. For example, if sugar is the first ingredient listed on a cereal box.
7. The summer Fly-In Festival in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, attended by thousands of aviators from all over the continent.
8. Even when Henri Matisse was confined to a wheelchair, he managed to create wonderful works of art.

#2 – Compound Subjects and Predicates

— A **compound subject** is made up of two or more simple subjects.

The car and the truck / sped through the intersection.
Six geese and three ducks / honked and quacked loudly.
My brother and sister / feel as though no one cares.

— A **compound predicate** is made up of two or more simple predicates.

The car and the truck / **sped through the intersection and raced around the next corner.**
Six geese and three ducks / **honked and quacked loudly, then scrambled madly for the food.**
My brother and sister / **feel as though no one cares and therefore no longer ask for help.**

Exercises – Compound Subjects and Predicates

A. In each of the following sentences, underline the subject (whether simple or compound) and circle the predicate (whether simple or compound).

1. Omar left the package on the crowded subway.
2. She and I will travel to Canmore, Alberta, after Christmas.
3. Mr. Santorini designs and makes exquisite amber jewelry.
4. The students have written and revised six essays this semester.
5. Geraldine plans to visit friends in both northern and southern Quebec.
6. Money and power motivate many people.
7. The Walters and the Fosters both buy and sell antique furniture.
8. Crocuses bloom early in the spring.
9. The performers chatted and joked before the show.
10. Not money alone but power, as well, motivates many people.

B. Compose two complete, correct sentences, each of which contains a compound subject and a simple predicate.

1. _____
_____.

2. _____
_____.

C. Compose two complete, correct sentences, each of which contains a simple subject and a compound predicate.

1. _____
_____.

2. _____
_____.

Quiz #2 – Compound Subjects and Predicates

A. In the blank spaces following the sentences below, indicate whether the sentences' subjects and predicates are simple or compound. Write *SS* in the first blank if the sentence has a simple subject. Write *CS* if the sentence has a compound subject. In the second blank, write *SP* if the predicate is simple. Write *CP* if the sentence has a compound predicate.

1. My partner and I want to know the truth. _____ / _____
2. A full cup of bleach fell off the table and splashed onto the carpet. _____ / _____
3. Several major cities have their own NHL teams. _____ / _____
4. The wind and hail knocked out power lines and left us all in the dark for hours. _____ / _____
5. Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 and became prime minister in 1963. _____ / _____
6. Chimpanzees, orangutans, and people are all primates. _____ / _____
7. Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge are fine cities. _____ / _____
8. My brother asked my best friend out to a movie, but forgot to show up. _____ / _____
9. Not only he but she, too, want an answer and want it immediately. _____ / _____
10. My fingers ache, and my back is breaking. _____ / _____

B. Compose two complete, correct sentences, each of which contains a compound subject and a simple predicate.

1. _____
_____.

2. _____
_____.

C. Compose two complete, correct sentences, each of which contains a simple subject and a compound predicate.

1. _____
_____.

2. _____
_____.

D. Compose a complete, correct sentence that contains a compound subject and a compound predicate.

1. _____
_____.

#3 – Independent and Dependent Clauses

— A clause is a group of words that appears within a sentence and that has a subject and a predicate of its own.

— An **independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence because it makes a finished statement.

The concert started before we arrived.
If you want to succeed, **you must work hard.**
Having sold the watch, **Alvin could now afford the fare.**

— A **dependent clause** cannot stand as a sentence on its own because, although it has a subject and a predicate, it does not make a finished statement. A dependent clause must be combined with an independent clause to form a sentence.

The concert started **before we arrived.**
If you want to succeed, you must work hard.
Having sold the watch, Alvin could now afford the fare.

Exercises – Independent and Dependent Clauses

A. In each of the following sentences, underline the independent clause/s and circle the dependent clause/s.

1. We traveled comfortably because we took a taxi.
2. At the concert, we heard the songs that were featured on the CD.
3. We talked to them before dinner was served, and they treated us to ice cream when it was done.
4. We walked and walked until we came to a rest station, where we drank water and had a snack.
5. It was a thrill, it was a pleasure, and it was a challenge, but it wasn't inexpensive.

B. For each of the following clauses, write an *I* before it if it is independent; write a *D* if it is dependent.

1. _____ they gathered the cows into the north pasture
2. _____ who seemed to enjoy the paintings he saw there
3. _____ the rabbit took the wrong turn at Albuquerque
4. _____ although we seldom attend the symphony

5. _____ dogs barked

Quiz #3 – Independent and Dependent Clauses

A. In each of the following sentences, underline the independent clause/s and circle the dependent clause/s.

1. Whenever I wiggle my ears, my eyebrows move.
2. My computer crashed when I tried to download a game.
3. Hannah thanked the man who explained the rules.
4. I left my wallet in my tote bag, which is on the kitchen table at home.
5. Given that I'm so smart, I should be rich by now.
6. My heart starts to beat faster when I think of our narrow escape.
7. Since Danny doesn't know where our campsite is, we probably won't see him when we finish our hike.
8. Heathcliff is upset when Catherine chooses to leave.
9. The strawberries that I found were in the container behind the bread.
10. My running shoe kept falling off because the laces were missing.

B. Write five complete, correct sentences, each containing one independent clause and one dependent clause. Underline the independent clause in each sentence.

1. _____
_____.
2. _____
_____.
3. _____
_____.
4. _____
_____.

5.

#4 – Phrases and Clauses

— A **phrase** is a group of words that function together as a single element, such as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb.

The tired surgeon seemed worried. [noun phrase]

We **should have won**. [verb phrase]

The room **in the basement** smelled musty. [adjective phrase modifying “room”]

Griffin spoke **with great feeling**. [adverb phrase modifying “spoke”]

— A **clause** differs from a phrase in that it contains a subject and a predicate.

The tired surgeon seemed worried. [two phrases—“**The tired surgeon**” and “seemed worried”—make up one independent clause]

When **he** looked up, **the tired surgeon** seemed worried. [two clauses—a dependent, “When **he** looked up,” and an independent, “**the tired surgeon** seemed worried”] → [each phrase—“looked up” and “seemed worried”—functions as the predicate of the clause]

I came / when **I** heard the sound, / but **he** was gone. [two independent clauses, “**I** came” and “but **he** was gone,” and one dependent clause, “when **I** heard the sound”] → [two phrases, “heard the sound” and “was gone”]

Sometimes a clause can be split by another clause.

The tired surgeon, [when **he** looked up,] seemed worried.

Exercise – Phrases and Clauses

A. For each sentence below, indicate in the space after it whether the underlined portion is a phrase [P] or a clause [C].

1. Did you know that about 400 billion cups of coffee are consumed worldwide each year? _____
2. In fact, coffee is the second largest commodity in the world, after petroleum. _____
3. The coffee plant originated in Ethiopia centuries ago. _____
4. The word *coffee* comes from an Arabic word meaning “wine” or “excitement.” _____
5. Coffee—or “Arabian wine”—was introduced to Europe in the 1600s. _____
6. The Venetians made coffee by adding raw green coffee beans to boiling water. _____
7. Coffeehouses soon spread and became part of European social life. _____

8. Since then, coffee has overtaken tea as the drink of choice for people in North America and Europe. _____
9. About half the world's coffee is grown in Brazil and Colombia. _____
10. If your coffee tastes bitter, try brewing it for a shorter time or using a coarser grind. _____
11. Keeping coffee in the fridge is a bad idea because the grounds will absorb other flavors. _____
12. Given its popularity, it is easy to forget that coffee is a stimulant. _____
13. Experts recommend limiting your intake to no more than three cups a day. _____
14. Voltaire, the eighteenth-century philosopher and writer, is said to have been a prodigious coffee drinker. _____
15. He consumed over fifty cups a day. _____

Quiz #4 – Phrases and Clauses

A. For each sentence below, indicate, in the space after it, whether the underlined portion is a phrase [P] or a clause [C].

1. The skylight in the bathroom is leaking. _____
2. The novels that you dislike so intensely are my favorites. _____
3. I've lost the key to my house. _____
4. Ringo left his drums unattended while he went to watch the squirrels. _____
5. I'd love to have a big, thick milkshake right now. _____
6. Jen and Ben had to be escorted from the movie theatre. _____
7. We have always lived in the castle. _____
8. Kapuskasing, which is in Northern Ontario, gets heavy snowfall in winter. _____
9. I would have expected more dignitaries to come out to greet the returning heroes. _____
10. Talking to my best friend always makes me happy. _____
11. Running through the forest, Yoshi was scratched by branches. _____
12. When Yoshi was running through the forest, he was scratched by branches. _____
13. Canada's economy depends on its abundant natural resources. _____
14. After years of gold panning, my uncle finally struck it rich. _____
15. I found myself laughing uproariously. _____

#5 – Four Sentence Structures: Simple, Compound, Complex, and Compound-Complex

— A **simple sentence** is made up of **one independent clause**.

Our cat dines on chicken and wine. [one independent clause]

The dog will eat any old slop. [one independent clause]

— A **compound sentence** is made up of **two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, such as *and, or, nor, but, so, for, therefore, or yet***.

Our cat dines on chicken and wine, / but the dog will eat any old slop. [two independent clauses joined by “but”]

We have seen the enemy, / faced him squarely in the field, / and fought honorably. [three independent clauses joined by “and”] → [Note that “**faced him squarely in the field**” and “**fought honorably**” *seem* not to be independent clauses, but really they are, because the opening words “**We have**” are understood to be a part of each segment of the sentence. If this one compound sentence were expressed as three simple sentences, it would be as follows: **We have seen the enemy. We have faced him squarely in the field. And we have fought honorably.**]

— A **complex sentence** is made up of **one independent clause and at least one dependent clause**.

While our cat dines on chicken and wine, / **the dog will eat any old slop.**
[dependent clause] [independent clause]

You should be sure to read all of the instructions / before you assemble the swing set.
[independent clause] [dependent clause]

— A **compound-complex sentence** is made up of **two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses**.

The house was sold, / **but we found another one** / that we liked.
[independent clause] [independent clause] [dependent clause]

I thought / that Mrs. Wickstead was in the hospital, / **but here she is.**
[ind. cl.] [d. cl.] [ind. cl.]

Exercises – Four Sentence Structures

A. Label each of the following sentences as simple, compound, or complex.

1. While I was eating lunch, I spilled my soup. _____
2. The girl in the red shirt has a beautiful singing voice. _____
3. My toes were numb, and my fingers ached. _____
4. Before you drive there, you should check your map. _____

5. Turn left at the corner, keep going straight, and turn right at the intersection. _____
6. Even if I'm starving, I will never eat a fast-food meal again. _____
7. I will not stop, nor will I apologize. _____

B. Rewrite each of the following sets of simple sentences in the form of a complete, correct compound or complex sentence.

1. I went to the store for milk. It was closed. I came home empty-handed.

2. She is feeling sick. She will eat many vegetables. They help the immune system.

3. Chocolate is my favorite food. My brothers always want some. My mother makes me share.

4. You want his autograph. Come to the concert. Ask him for it.

B. In each of the following compound-complex sentences, underline each independent clause and circle each dependent clause.

1. I bailed, Shelly steered, and we both prayed that we would be rescued.
2. Although I enjoy it, English grammar is full of quirks, and it can be frustrating.
3. Farley Mowat, who wrote *Lost in the Barrens*, knows how to create suspense, and his book kept me turning pages until the end.

Quiz #5 – Four Sentence Structures

A. Each sentence below has a different structure—simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Label each one appropriately.

1. My mother's family lives in Pakistan, while my father's family lives in Scotland.

2. My mother's family lives in Pakistan, my father's family lives in Scotland, and we live in Canada.

3. My mother's and father's families live in Pakistan and Scotland respectively.

4. Though we live in Canada, my mother's family lives in Pakistan, and my father's family lives in Scotland.

B. Write two complete, correct compound-complex sentences. Underline each independent clause and circle each dependent clause.

1. _____
_____.

2. _____
_____.

#6 – Restrictive and Non-restrictive Elements

Words, phrases, and clauses that act as adjectives can be identified as either restrictive (necessary) or non-restrictive (unnecessary).

— A **restrictive element** contains information that is necessary to the meaning of the sentence. The restrictive element often provides information that helps differentiate the specific subject from other possible subjects. It is not set off from the rest of the sentence by punctuation.

The boy **with freckles** works at the supermarket.
The instructor **who taught me to drive** has a perfect driving record.
Singer-songwriters **like Joni Mitchell** don't come along every day.

— A **non-restrictive element** is descriptive, but it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. No crucial information is lost if it is removed. A non-restrictive element often describes or re-names a subject. It is set off from the rest of the sentence by commas, dashes, or parentheses.

James, **who has freckles**, works at the supermarket.
That instructor—**incidentally, the one who taught me to drive**—has a perfect driving record.
Some singer-songwriters (**Joni Mitchell, for example**) don't come along every day.

* Note that in each of these three examples, if you take out the non-restrictive passage, you still have a complete, correct sentence.

James works at the supermarket.
That instructor has a perfect driving record.
Some singer-songwriters don't come along every day.

Exercise – Restrictive and Non-restrictive Elements

A. Identify each boldfaced group of words as either restrictive [R] or non-restrictive [NR]. Add necessary punctuation in the case of non-restrictive elements.

1. The climbing instructor **affectionately known as Lead Foot** is off sick today. _____
2. Bombardier **which is a Canadian company** is a worldwide leader in the transportation and aerospace industries. _____
3. The guy **who looks after the grounds** is hiring a student this summer. _____
4. Black holes **which suck everything into themselves** exist only in outer space. _____
5. Popcorn **without butter** sticks in my throat. _____
6. My favorite show **The Simpsons** is on at 10:00 p.m. _____

7. Louie **the baker** makes a lot of dough. _____
8. The bike **that I ordered from the catalogue** didn't have a kickstand. _____
9. T-shirts **with brand names on them** turn people into billboards. _____
10. Saskatoon **my hometown** sits on the bank of the South Saskatchewan River. _____
11. The letter **he sent me** is safely tucked away in a drawer. _____
12. Canada's newest territory **Nunavut** was created in 1999. _____
13. Rufus Wainwright **who is the son of acclaimed singer-songwriter Loudon Wainwright** has his own successful musical career. _____
14. The leaf **that is on Canada's flag** is a stylized maple leaf. _____
15. I threw out the socks **that had the holes in them** but kept the rest. _____

Quiz #6 – Restrictive and Non-restrictive Elements

A. Identify each boldfaced group of words as either restrictive [*R*] or non-restrictive [*NR*]. Add necessary punctuation in the case of non-restrictive elements.

1. People **who live in glass houses** shouldn't throw stones. _____
2. The store **at the end of the street** sells fresh vegetables. _____
3. I lost my wallet **which has my library card in it**. _____
4. Mr. and Mrs. Balducci **whose lawn I used to mow** are moving soon. _____
5. Our first dog **Frederick** was excessively hairy. _____
6. Her face had an expression **that I will never forget**. _____
7. Asia **the largest continent** is home to more than half the world's population. _____

B. In each of the following sentences, underline the non-restrictive element and add the necessary comma/s.

1. The polar ice caps which are sheets of ice that cover the North and South Pole are melting.
2. According to scientists, this is partly the result of human activity especially the burning of fossil fuels in cars and factories.
3. This phenomenon which is known as global warming may cause rising sea levels and widespread flooding.

#7 – Avoiding Sentence Fragments

— A **sentence fragment** is a word or group of words that is not a complete sentence but is written as if it were. In some contexts, fragments used deliberately can be effective. They are useful, for example, in dialogue, in advertising copy, and in informal texts. In general, however, student writing, especially critical responses and other relatively formal texts, should not include fragments.

Fragment: **Just before eating.**

Corrected: **Just before eating, he phoned his mother.**

Fragment: **Try to get some exercise. Walking, running, or swimming.**

Corrected: **Try to get some exercise. You might enjoy walking, running, or swimming.**

Fragment: **Go see the movie. If you dare.**

Corrected: **Go see the movie, if you dare.**

Fragments: **The guard stood at attention. Shoulders back. Chin up.**

Corrected: **The guard stood at attention with his shoulders back and chin up.**

Exercises – Avoiding Sentence Fragments

A. For each of the items below, indicate a fragment by writing an *F* in the following blank; indicate a correct sentence by writing a *C*.

1. Clyde refused. _____
2. While serving her residency at a Manitoba hospital. _____
3. To be a member of the Royal Ontario Museum expedition to Costa Rica. _____
4. The men who first recognized that insulin was a treatment for diabetes. _____
5. As long as the government continues to provide subsidies. _____
6. It takes dedication to become a full-time writer. _____
7. Inevitably, things change. _____
8. Impressed she was not. _____
9. Stop! _____
10. In the hearts of the prairie dwellers. _____

- B. Identify the sentence fragments in the following paragraph. Then, rewrite the paragraph using complete, correct sentences.**

Fall. My favorite season. In the fall I can do all the things I most enjoy. Hike, play touch football, watch the baseball playoffs. During fall in Gander, there are special events. Fall fairs, cross-country runs, barn dances. Just drive in the country. You'll see a panorama of colors. Every possible shade of red, brown, orange, and yellow. Reflecting off the water. A stunningly beautiful scene.

Quiz #7 – Avoiding Sentence Fragments

A. For each of the items below, indicate a fragment by writing an *F* in the following blank; indicate a correct sentence by writing a *C*.

1. Writing furiously and drinking cup after cup of tea. _____
2. Make me an offer I can't refuse. _____
3. When pigs fly! _____
4. Canada, with its abundant resources and reputation for tolerance. _____
5. Whenever the mood strikes me. _____
6. To see the world in a grain of sand. _____
7. The tickets were gripped tightly in his hand. _____
8. Because the lights are now on. _____
9. Go! _____
10. Pass the margarine. _____

B. Identify the sentence fragments in the following paragraph. Then, rewrite the paragraph using complete, correct sentences.

Any musician can tell you that perfect pitch is a rare attribute. Canadian pianist Glenn Gould had it. Perfect pitch is the ability to recognize any note on a musical scale. Without hearing it in relation to any other notes. For example. Someone with perfect pitch could listen to a single note and identify it. Relative pitch is a more common ability. Recognizing a note in relation to another note. This skill is what allows us to hear a song sung in a high voice, then in a low voice, as the same song.

#8 – Avoiding Fused and Comma-spliced Sentences

— A **fused sentence** occurs when two or more independent clauses are placed next to each other without any separating punctuation or coordinating conjunction.

Fused sentence: You should get a pair of these boots they're great.

Corrected: **You should get a pair of these boots, because they're great.**

Fused sentence: Try to get some exercise you might enjoy walking, running, or swimming.

Corrected: **Try to get some exercise; you might enjoy walking, running, or swimming.**

Fused sentence: Have mercy we all make mistakes.

Corrected: **Have mercy. We all make mistakes.**

— A **comma-spliced sentence**, like a fused sentence, occurs when two or more independent clauses are placed next to each other without sufficient separation. Here, a comma alone is used to separate the independent clauses, where it would be necessary to use a coordinating conjunction or otherwise reword one of the clauses.

Comma-splice: You should get a pair of these boots, they're great.

Corrected: **You should get a pair of these boots, because they're great.**

Comma-splice: Try to get some exercise, you might enjoy walking, running, or swimming.

Corrected: **Try to get some exercise; you might enjoy walking, running, or swimming.**

Comma-splice: Have mercy, we all make mistakes.

Corrected: **Have mercy. We all make mistakes.**

Exercises – Avoiding Fused and Comma-spliced Sentences

A. Rewrite all of the following fused or comma-spliced sentences as complete, correct sentences.

Note:

The direction here is to “rewrite all of the . . . sentences.” This direction is to be taken seriously. Even if the correction you choose to make involves no substantial rewording—even if you are simply inserting a semi-colon or an *and* or a *but*—you still need to rewrite the whole passage. After all, the principal purpose of these writing-skills worksheets is to help students learn to consistently write **COMPLETE, CORRECT SENTENCES**. The more complete, correct sentences you write, then, the better!

1. We walked along the beach, talking about this and that, the sun was setting over the water.

2. I never listen to that radio station all the DJs are idiots.

3. Roller skates first appeared in 1760, however, they were not well received at that time.

4. The fellow giving the demonstration lost control then he crashed into a priceless mirror.

5. Watch out, it's slippery on the steps.

6. New Brunswick is Canada's only officially bilingual province about one-third of its residents are Francophone.

7. I was in a slump I hadn't scored a goal in ten games.

8. My coach was worried believe me so was I.

9. What would it take to get me back on the scoreboard, I didn't know, neither did she.

10. Everyone makes promises, how many keep them?

Quiz #8 – Avoiding Fused and Comma-spliced Sentences

A. Rewrite all of the following fused or comma-spliced sentences as complete, correct sentences.

1. The grass is soaked, the garden hose was left on too long.

2. We went to the mall we were supposed to meet our friends all of us were going to see a movie together.

3. First we did some research then we built the model.

4. Margaret Atwood was at the conference so was Michael Ondaatje he gave a great speech.

5. Tumbler Ridge was once a coal-mining town however the mine was closed, now the town is looking for new residents.

6. The sunrise was stunning, the sky was lit up with shades of red, we stood watching silently.

7. Watching Wayne Gretzky play hockey was like watching ballet he made everything look easy.

8. I'd love to go, however I'm working till nine that night.

9. Katrina's a brilliant skateboarder she's been practicing all year.

10. Why would anyone go to one of those stupid slasher movies, their plots are so predictable and the violence is so pointlessly gross?

#9 – Subject/Verb Agreement

— A singular subject requires a singular verb (predicate).

The **judge** / **comes** to a reasonable conclusion.

The **committee** / **is** wasting no time. [“committee” is a collective noun—i.e. made up of separate elements, but only one group]

The **herd of cows** / **grazes** in this pasture. [“herd of cows” is treated as a collective noun even though the phrase includes a plural noun]

— A plural subject requires a plural verb (predicate).

The **judges** / **come** to a reasonable conclusion. [if two or more judges are working together to reach one conclusion]

The **judges** / **come** to reasonable conclusions. [if two or more judges are each coming to separate conclusions]

The **committees** / **are** wasting no time. [two or more committees]

The **committee members** / **are** wasting no time. [emphasis on the individuals within one group]

The **cows** / **graze** in this pasture.

The **herds of cows** / **graze** in this pasture.

* A subject that includes a word like *each, every, everyone, anyone, everything, anything, either/or, or neither/nor* is usually treated as singular.

Each of the children is gifted. [~~Each of the children are gifted.~~]

Every bird among the flocks knows where to fly. [~~Every bird among the flocks know where to fly.~~]

Anyone takes all she needs. [~~Anyone take all they need.~~]

Everyone judges for himself. [~~Everyone judge for themselves.~~]

Everything in their traveling bags is considered suspicious. [~~Everything in their traveling bags are considered suspicious.~~]

Anything the hosts do for their guests is well appreciated. [~~Anything the hosts do for their guests are well appreciated.~~]

Either the tall actor or the short one plays the role well. [~~Either the tall actor or the short one play the role well.~~]

Neither this lamp nor that one is right for the room. [~~Neither this lamp nor that one are right for the room.~~]

Exercise – Subject/Verb Agreement

A. For each of the following paired sentences, choose the correctly written one—that is, the one in which the subject and verb agree.

1. A. The team play soccer every Wednesday evening.
B. The team plays soccer every Wednesday evening.
2. A. The members of the team play soccer passionately.
B. The members of the team plays soccer passionately.
3. A. The mountains is beautiful.
B. The mountains are beautiful.
4. A. The range of mountains is beautiful.
B. The range of mountains are beautiful.
5. A. The ranges of mountains is beautiful.
B. The ranges of mountains are beautiful.
6. A. The jury were out for three days.
B. The jury was out for three days.
7. A. One of the musicians are out of tune.
B. One of the musicians is out of tune.
8. A. Either John or one of his sons is going to buy our pictures.
B. Either John or one of his sons are going to buy our pictures.
9. A. Everyone who participated in the clubs last year is to receive a certificate.
B. Everyone who participated in the clubs last year are to receive a certificate.
10. A. Either these instructions or my understanding are faulty.
B. Either these instructions or my understanding is faulty.

Quiz #9 – Subject/Verb Agreement

A. For each of the following paired sentences, choose the correctly written one—that is, the one in which the subject and verb agree.

1. A. My family live in Cape Breton.
B. My family lives in Cape Breton.
2. A. The sky, huge and blue and lightly salted with clouds, loom above us.
B. The sky, huge and blue and lightly salted with clouds, looms above us.
3. A. The committee is looking into the possibility of rescheduling the dance dates.
B. The committee are looking into the possibility of rescheduling the dance dates.
4. A. Each of the broadcasters speaks impeccable English.
B. Each of the broadcasters speak impeccable English.
5. A. Neither they nor we goes.
B. Neither they nor we go.
6. A. There was, without question, too many people in the room.
B. There were, without question, too many people in the room.
7. A. Both leaders of the dance troupe that gathers in the gym is sick today.
B. Both leaders of the dance troupe that gathers in the gym are sick today.
8. A. I'm not sure which one it is, but one of these four speakers is giving feedback.
B. I'm not sure which one it is, but one of these four speakers are giving feedback.
9. A. His ability to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of humans make Shakespeare one of the greatest playwrights of all time.
B. His ability to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of humans makes Shakespeare one of the greatest playwrights of all time.
10. A. The side effects of this potent drug are too dangerous for people with heart conditions.
B. The side effects of this potent drug is too dangerous for people with heart conditions.

#10 – Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement

— A **pronoun** is a word (sometimes a phrase) that replaces or stands for a noun or another pronoun. Some common pronouns include the following:

I	me	my	mine	you	your
he	him	his	she	her	hers
it	its	we	our	ours	they
them	their	theirs	who	whom	whose
himself	herself	themselves	us	ourselves	myself
itself	this	that	these	those	which
all	another	any	anybody	anyone	anything
both	each	each one	either	everybody	everyone
everything	few	many	many a	neither	nobody
none	no one	one	other	several	somebody
someone	something	each other	one another	each other's	one another's
thou (archaic)	thee (archaic)	thy (archaic)	thine (archaic)		

In some cases, numerals—cardinals (*one, two, three, etc.*) and ordinals (*first, second, third, etc.*)—serve as pronouns. For example: *Two are enough for me.* and *The sixth was the toughest.*

— An **antecedent** is the word that a pronoun replaces or that it refers back to. Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in number and, in some cases, in gender.

My **mother** thought that **she** had locked **herself** out of **her** own house.
 antecedent ← pronoun ← pronoun ← pronoun

* In this example, the pronouns “she,” “herself,” and “her” agree in number and gender with the principal antecedent “mother.” Obviously, if all of the pronoun references in the sentence are *meant* to be to “mother,” it would be absurd to say something like *My mother thought that we had locked themselves out of his own house.*

* Sometimes a sentence is structured in such a way that the pronoun does not refer back to the antecedent, but *forward* to it. For instance:

Thinking that **she** had locked **herself** out of **her** own house, my **mother** sighed heavily.
 → → →

— When a **singular indefinite pronoun** is used as the antecedent for another pronoun or set of pronouns, the referring pronoun/s must also be singular. The singular indefinites—**words indicating one person or thing**—include these:

everyone	everybody	someone	somebody	anyone	anybody
no one	nobody	each	either	neither	nothing

In ordinary conversation, plural pronouns such as *they, their, or them* are often used to refer to singular indefinites. This habit of speech, however, is not acceptable in formal, or even relatively formal, writing.

Incorrect: **Everyone** is responsible for **their** own belongings.
 Correct: **Everyone** is responsible for **his or her** own belongings.

[Alternately, change the antecedent to plural: **All** are responsible for **their** own belongings.]

Incorrect: **Each** participant got what **they** could for **themselves**.
 Correct: **Each** participant got what **he** could for **himself**.

[Alternately: **All** participants got what **they** could for **themselves**.]

* A special consideration in this matter is the issue of sexist diction, a topic that will be dealt with in a separate handout.

Exercise – Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement

A. In each of the following sentences, underline every pronoun and circle its antecedent. Connect the pronouns and their antecedents with arrows.

1. Everett was not a man who enjoyed socializing.
2. The computer has become more important as its roles and capacities have changed.
3. Amir's cell phone battery died because he forgot to charge it.
4. Sarah gave herself a pat on the back after she repaired the car's cooling system and replaced its plugs.
5. The students in his homeroom knew that Julian was bound for disaster.
6. The conductor described the songs she wanted us to play and said that she wanted us to memorize them.
7. Morton realized that if he hoped to submit his letter to the head office at all, he would have to finish it by noon and get it there by 2:00.
8. A flock of geese flew overhead on its way south for the winter.
9. Many of the doctors and nurses working for Medicins Sans Frontiers have risked their lives in various war zones.
10. Tendrils of smoke slowly curled their grey fingers around the old building.

Quiz #10 – Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement

A. In each of the following sentences, underline every pronoun and circle its antecedent. Connect the pronouns and their antecedents with arrows.

1. I wrote a note to myself that said, “Take no prisoners!”
2. Barnaby, who was born in Winnipeg, often speaks fondly of his youthful days there.
3. Some aficionados say they feel that Picasso’s *Guernica* is his most potent work, and it’s certainly my favorite.
4. The police recovered the watercolor that they had announced earlier was stolen from the gallery.
5. Ever since his traumatic encounter with the killer gerbils, Arnie has had phobia about their entering his house.

#11 – Personal and Relative Pronouns

Personal pronouns have different forms, or cases, to indicate their functions.

— A pronoun in the **subjective case** functions in the subject of a clause. Subjective pronouns include *I, you, he, she, it, we, and they*.

You have a lot of class.
Joan and **I** visited Theresa.
They knocked on the door.
She is the one I will marry.

— A pronoun in the **objective case** functions in the predicate of a clause. Objective pronouns include *me, you, him, her, it, us, and them*.

The class is anxious to meet **you**.
Theresa opened the door for Joan and **me**.
The kids tricked **them**.
He will marry **her**.

— A pronoun in the **possessive case** indicates ownership. Possessive personal pronouns include *mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, and theirs*.

The house on the left is **hers**.
Ours is the one on the right.
This one could be **yours**.
That one is mine.

* Note: While apostrophes are used with nouns to indicate possession—e.g. **Richard's** shoes, the **ocean's** waves, the two **dogs'** bones—they are not used with the pronouns *yours, hers, ours, and theirs* to indicate possession. Remember, therefore, **it is always wrong to write *your's, her's, our's, and their's*; and the word *it's* can serve only as the contraction of *it is*.**

* Regarding the words *my, your, his, her, our, and their*: When one of these words appears before a noun, it is not serving as a pronoun, but as a possessive adjective.

my knapsack
his courage
her text
their contract

— A **relative pronoun** is used to introduce a relative clause, which is a dependent clause functioning as an adjective in a sentence. The most common relative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, and *that*. A relative pronoun replaces the noun or pronoun that is its antecedent in a main clause.

The tree **that died** was chopped down yesterday. [“**that died**” is a relative clause, an adjective modifying “tree”] → [antecedent of “**that**” is “tree”]

My mother, **who hates garlic**, makes a great spaghetti sauce. [“**who hates garlic**” is a relative clause, an adjective modifying “mother”] → [antecedent of “**who**” is “mother”]

The grammar test, **which may well be the death of me**, is slated for next Tuesday. [“**which may well be the death of me**” is a relative clause, an adjective modifying “test”] → [antecedent of “**which**” is “test”]

* Remember that non-restrictive elements in a sentence must be set off with commas. In the three example sentences above, the relative clauses in the second and third sentences are non-restrictive. The way to tell is to take out the clause and see if the sentence still makes sense. In the second: “My mother . . . makes a great spaghetti sauce.” It makes sense; therefore, the clause “who hates garlic” is non-restrictive. The same principle applies to the third sentence. Note, however, that if you take the clause “that died” out of the first sentence, the intended meaning of the sentence is impaired; it is no longer clear *which* tree was chopped down. The speaker of the sentence distinguishes the tree from other possible trees by noting that it is the one “that died.” A restrictive element, such as this one is, must not be set off with commas.

Exercises – Personal and Relative Pronouns

A. For each of the following sentences, underline the correct personal pronoun; then, in the blank under the sentence, write the case of the pronoun.

1. Anu strongly believed that the award should be [hers / her's].

2. [He / Him] and Sandeep pretended to be hurt.

3. The train carried Mr. Lu and [I / me] back home.

4. It is [them / they] who should pay for the window.

5. It was [she / her] who spoke first.

6. Alana and [he / him] are going on a ski trip to Panorama.

7. [Me / I] and my friends are going to Eau Claire Market.

8. The only ones chosen for parts in the play were [he / him] and [I / me].

9. In the confusion, they picked up my luggage, and I picked up [their's / theirs].

10. Let's take Philip's car; it's faster than [yours / your's].

B. For each of the following sentences, underline every relative pronoun and circle its antecedent. If the relative clause is a non-restrictive element, insert commas where appropriate.

1. It was Mario who played the most important role in the project.

2. Laurence Olivier who played hundreds of roles over his long career in theatre and film is regarded as one of the greatest actors who ever lived.

3. The store that sold movies and video games has gone out of business.

4. The lamp which is made of stained glass was created by a celebrated Italian designer.

5. The skates that you want are on sale at the store that we passed by last weekend.

Quiz #11 – Personal and Relative Pronouns

A. For each of the following sentences, underline the correct personal pronoun; then, in the blank under the sentence, write the case of the pronoun.

1. Roy went home, but [us / we] carried on.

2. It couldn't have been [her / she] that Jacob saw on the evening news, could it?

3. Your parrot thought that Ali and [I / me] were intruders.

4. Alphonse went ice fishing in Northern Quebec with [them / they] and their dog.

5. It is [her / she], not her brother, that looks most like their father.

6. The best exhibit at the show was [theirs / their's]

7. [Me / I] and Bob always get there first.

8. Not [she / her] but [I / me] was chosen to lead the council.

9. [Them / They] and I are teaming up to win the trivia contest.

10. Arlene brought her umbrella, but Dianne had to go back for [her's / hers].

B. For each of the following sentences, underline every relative pronoun and circle its antecedent. If the relative clause is a non-restrictive element, insert commas where appropriate.

1. Rohinton Mistry who has written several excellent novels is one of Canada's best writers.
2. My aunt lives in a bungalow that was built during the Great Depression.
3. Calgary which is the Flames home city is an excellent place to live.

4. Give this earring to the woman who is searching the ground over there.
5. The teacher who taught me in Grade 1 is retiring.

#12 – Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

— A **dangling modifier** is a modifier—an adjectival or adverbial word or phrase—that does not have a word or phrase to refer to. It is said to dangle because it hangs loosely in the sentence and produces unintended ambiguity, sometimes absurdity.

Dangling: **Holding my nose**, the smelly cheese went straight to the garbage.
Corrected: Holding my nose, *I* took the smelly cheese straight to the garbage.

Dangling: **Standing at the station**, the train hurtled by.
Corrected: Standing at the station, *she* watched the train hurtle by.

Dangling: **Gazing stupefied**, Mount Robson was truly impressive.
Corrected: Gazing stupefied, *the traveler* saw that Mount Robson was truly impressive.

— A **misplaced modifier** is one that does not point clearly to its intended referent. To avoid misplaced modification, place a modifier as close as possible to the word or phrase it is meant to modify.

Misplaced: *I* discovered the meaning of life **walking through the forest**.
Corrected: Walking through the forest, *I* discovered the meaning of life.

Misplaced: **Safe and sound**, the firefighter carried *the baby* out of the smoky apartment.
Corrected: The firefighter carried *the baby*, safe and sound, out of the smoky apartment.

Misplaced: The mouse *ran* to escape the cat **down the hole**.
Corrected: The mouse *ran* down the hole to escape the cat.

Exercise – Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

A. Identify the fault in each of the following sentences by circling either “Dangling modifier” or “Misplaced modifier.” Then rewrite the sentence to clarify its meaning.

1. Screaming and waving, the roller coaster took us careening around the sharp turn then down the big dip.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

2. Benjamin visited the cottage where Stephen Leacock lived during the 1930s last summer.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

3. The house was empty during the winter without you.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

4. Gleaming with a new coat of paint, the mechanic brought me my car.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

5. Working round the clock, the project was finished on schedule.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

Quiz #12 – Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

A. Identify the fault in each of the following sentences by circling either “Dangling modifier” or “Misplaced modifier.” Then rewrite the sentence to clarify its meaning.

1. Waiting for news, the time passed with agonizing slowness.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

2. Looking for gold, the Caribou Wagon Road was traveled by over 100, 000 people in the late 1800s.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

3. The firetrucks pulled in as I arrived with sirens wailing.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

4. Mavis presented a paper about Canada’s role in peacekeeping last Tuesday.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

5. Skiing down the hill, a tree suddenly appeared in front of me.

Dangling modifier

Misplaced modifier

#13 – Using Capital Letters

— Capitalize the following:

- the word *I* and the first letter of the first word of a sentence
- the first letter of each important word in the titles of a books, poem, story, article, song, and so on
- the first letter of a proper noun (e.g. Canada, Shakespeare) or proper adjective (e.g. Canadian, Shakespearean)
- the first letter of a word denoting a family relationship when it is used as equivalent to a name (e.g. *I will ask Dad.* BUT *I will ask my dad.*)
- the first letter of a person’s title when it comes before his/her name (e.g. Mayor Quimby, Doctor Hibbert)
- the first letter in a title, day, month, or part of a street address, whether abbreviated or not (e.g. Mr., Miss, Ms., Monday, Thurs., Avenue, Blvd.)
- all letters in the abbreviations of provinces (e.g. AB, ON, MB)
- the first letter of the first word in the salutation or closing of a letter (e.g. Dear sir, Yours truly)
- the first letter of a geographic place name (e.g. British Columbia, Bombay, Springbank, New York, the Rocky Mountains, the Bow River)
- the first letter of a direction when it is used to designate a specific region or when it is part of a place name (e.g. the North, the West Coast, South Asia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland); otherwise, directions are lower-cased (e.g. *We drove east, then traveled through the southern states of the U.S.*)

Exercise – Using Capital Letters

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, supplying capital letters where appropriate.

1. for lunch on thursday we had salisbury steak, cheese, and cold potato soup.

2. my uncle, peter preston, read us a poem called “the bull calf,” by the canadian poet irving Layton.

3. our captain saw private kayla vanderclieff on *who wants to be a millionaire: canadian edition.*

4. i saw a movie about the life of dr. norman bethune, a canadian who became a hero in china.

5. please send the package to 255 riel blvd., harvest gate, mb, p3j 4h2.

Quiz #13 – Using Capital Letters

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, supplying capital letters where appropriate.

1. my friends in prince edward island know how dangerous a storm in the north atlantic can be.

2. st. catherine street is a few blocks south of sherbrooke street in montreal.

3. kate and anna mcgarrigle wrote a song called “heart like a wheel.”

4. learning mandarin will help you to understand cantonese, vietnamese, japanese, and many other languages of south asia.

5. i love to eat thai food, but it’s too spicy for my mother.

#14 – Using Commas

— Use commas in the following cases:

- to separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series (e.g. *We bought apples, pears, and grapes.* // *He was an expert marksman, a talented storyteller, and an avid baseball fan.* // *I arrived early, they arrived late, and we missed each other entirely.*)

- before a conjunction in a compound sentence (e.g. *Joyce turned off the TV, and time seemed to stand still*); however, do not use a comma to separate items in a compound subject or predicate (e.g. *Agatha and her friend entered the lobby.* // *I kicked off my shoes and relaxed.*)

- to set off non-restrictive elements, introductory words, phrases, and clauses, and information added as an aside (e.g. *The van, which never did run very well, finally broke down.* // *According to Bernard, the road to East Coulee is closed.* // *I don't want to go back there, at least not now.*)

- between the date and the year (e.g. March 3, 2004)

- between a town or city and its province or state (e.g. Calgary, AB // Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

- to separate items in a series of coordinate adjectives (adjectives next to each other are said to be coordinate if they could be written with the word *and* between them or when their order can be changed)

Coordinate adjectives [use commas]: Evan quickly proved himself a **friendly, trustworthy, hard-working** employee.

Not coordinate adjectives [do not use commas]: Evan quietly entered the **old brick office** building.

Exercise – Using Commas

A. Insert commas where appropriate in the following sentences.

1. According to most historians the incident that sparked World War I was the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28 1914.
2. Ellen Albert Marion and Ross who worked together on the project earned top marks for their presentation an achievement they were all rightly proud of.
3. With all due respect I don't like what you're telling me and I don't care to discuss it further.
4. Whenever I visit Winnipeg Manitoba memories of long blissful carefree childhood summers come flooding back.
5. If you want to stay healthy eat well and exercise regularly.

Quiz #14 – Using Commas

A. Insert commas where appropriate in the following sentences.

1. He was clever but he couldn't make decisions at least not without a good deal of long hard thinking.
2. Heiko made a delicious cabbage salad Adam baked his special sesame chicken which was very tasty and Louise bought sweet warm honey-drenched baklava from the local Greek bakery.
3. I gave Adrian my old bicycle which I never use anymore.
4. When gathering information from a web site consider the general reliability of the site and always try to verify the accuracy of the information from another source.
5. Jumbo a famous circus elephant died on September 15 1885 near St. Thomas Ontario.

#15 – Using Quotation Marks

— Use quotation marks to enclose a **direct quotation**—that is, when you reproduce exactly a word, phrase or passage from someone else’s speech or writing.

Gloria Steinem observed, “We are becoming the men we once hoped to marry.” [transcription of Steinem’s exact words]

— **Do not** use quotation marks to enclose an **inirect quotation**—that is, when you are reporting a text in paraphrase rather than reproducing it exactly.

Gloria Steinem observed that many women are now becoming the men they once hoped to marry. [paraphrase of Steinem’s words]

— Use single quotation marks to enclose quotations *within* quotations.

Claire noted, “It was Gloria Steinem who said, ‘We are becoming the men we once hoped to marry.’” [Steinem’s exact words contained within Claire’s exact words]

— Follow the punctuation patterns below for quoting text or writing dialogue in a prose narrative.

* Use a pair of commas to set off the identifying tag when it interrupts the quoted passage.

“In the future,” pop artist Andy Warhol once said, “everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes.”

“Be careful,” Erin warned. “Reptiles can be tricky.”

* Use a comma after the tag that introduces a quoted passage.

Andy Warhol once quipped, “In the future, everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes.”

* No commas are needed with an embedded quotation.

If Andy was right, I can expect to be “world-famous for fifteen minutes.”

* Use a comma to set off the end of a quotation from the identifying tag that follows. However, if the quoted text itself ends with an exclamation point or a question mark, let that punctuation replace the comma; the following tag still begins with a lower-case letter even though it comes after end punctuation.

“Bring your text,” my teacher advised.

“Bring your text!” my teacher snapped.

“Did you bring your text?” my teacher asked.

— Use quotation marks to set off the following categories of titles.

- * Essays – “**How I Spent My Summer Vacation**”
- * Short stories – “**The Tell-Tale Heart**”
- * Poems – “**The Raven**”
- * Songs – “**Twist and Shout**”
- * Chapter titles – “**The Sound of the Shell**” (*Lord of the Flies*) [Note, however, that chapters identified by numbers rather than titles are not enclosed in quotation marks –e.g. **Chapter 6 of Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, NOT “Chapter 6.”**]
- * Articles in magazines, newspapers, and professional journals – “**The Case for Syntactic Imagery**” (*English Journal*)
- * Speeches – “**The Gettysburg Address**”
- * Episodes of programs in series – “**Homer Gets Fired**” (*The Simpsons*)

Exercise – Using Quotation Marks

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, incorporating needed quotation marks and appropriate punctuation. Note that a few of the sentences include indirect quotations, which are not enclosed in quotation marks; do not rewrite these already complete, correct sentences.

1. She often said Man does not live by bread alone.

2. We demand our rights chanted the workers.

3. Do you want to go to the game he asked.

4. I said only that I wasn’t interested in what he had to sell.

5. The Beatles' Paperback Writer is one of my favorite songs.

6. I had a hard time wading through Chapter 8, Inertia and Motion.

7. The stranger asked us how far Moose Jaw was from Regina.

8. The instructor said You'll find the information you need in the article Cultivating Change, which is in the latest edition of the magazine *Elm Street*.

9. Mom's angry reply to me was Look, I don't care if you *do* think this meatloaf like totally sucks. You'll eat every last bit of it, mister!

10. John said Mary softly thank you for this beautiful gift.

Quiz #15 – Using Quotation Marks

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, incorporating needed quotation marks and appropriate punctuation. Note that a few of the sentences include indirect quotations, which are not enclosed in quotation marks; do not rewrite these already complete, correct sentences.

1. No shouted Beatrice I will not budge.

2. Who Constance inquired is in charge here.

3. Malcolm was heard to say that he believed the manager was acting unreasonably.

4. Artichoke Pie is tonight's *Black Harbour* episode.

5. Shakespeare's phrase what dreams may come was used as the title of a movie featuring Robin Williams.

6. Recounting his experience on stage, the actor said I got as far as To be or not to be, but I couldn't remember a single line beyond that.

7. Who said he wouldn't be able to attend the recital?

8. Carl wanted to know what all the fuss was about.

9. It is equally true, I should add continued Mackenzie King that if some countries have too much history, we have too much geography.

10. I play the French horn said Delores in fact, I should be practicing right now she added.

#16 – Using Italics

— Use italics to set off elements spoken of as themselves and for terms being defined.

Is that letter a *p* or a *g*?

I forget the exact address, but I know it has a *3* in it.

Does *through* rhyme with *cough*?

His pronunciation of *out and about* as *oot and aboot* told us he was from Canada.

A *closet drama* is a play meant to be read, not performed.

Remember, however, that if the definition is quoted from a dictionary, you must enclose the definition in quotation marks—e.g. The *Encarta World English Dictionary* defines *paleozoology* as “the study of ancient animals and animal life using fossils and other paleontological evidence.”

— Use italics for emphasis—that is, to add extra weight to a particular word or idea (be careful, though, not to overuse italics for emphasis).

As for protecting the children from exploitation, the chief and indeed *only* exploiters of children these days *are* schools. (John Holt, “School Is Bad for Children”)

Initially, poetry might be defined as a kind of language that says *more* and says it *more intensely* than does ordinary language. (Laurence Perrine, *Sound and Sense*)

— Use italics for clarity—that is, to avoid confusion when a sentence may have more than one meaning.

This time Jill forgot the *key*. [last time Jill forgot something else]

This time *Jill* forgot the key. [last time someone else forgot the key]

— Use italics to set off foreign words or phrases that are not commonly used in English.

Many poets throughout the ages have focused on the theme of *carpe diem*, a Latin phrase meaning “seize the day.”

He was guilty of the worst sort of *schadenfreude*, delighting wickedly in the misfortune of others.

— Use italics to set off the following categories of titles.

* Books (fiction and non-fiction) – *Swallowing Stones* // *Sightlines*

* Newspapers – *The Calgary Herald*

* Magazines – *National Geographic*

* Journals – *New England Journal of Medicine*

* Films – *Shrek 2*

* TV and radio programs – *Sesame Street* // *As It Happens*

- * Long poems – *The Odyssey*
- * Full-length plays – *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- * Recordings – *Dark Side of the Moon*
- * Paintings and sculptures – *Mona Lisa* // *The Thinker*
- * Ships, trains, aircraft, spacecraft – *Titanic* // *Orient Express* // *Hindenberg* // *Spacelab*

Note: In handwritten texts, the equivalent of italics is underlining. In word-processed texts, where italics are called for, *use the italic function only*, not the underline function along with it.

Exercise – Using Italics

A. In the following sentences, circle the elements that should be italicized.

1. Charles Dickens' novel Oliver Twist is resolved through deus ex machina, a term that refers to an improbable resolution of a problem in a narrative.
2. He dotted every i and crossed every t.
3. The opera company's production of The Marriage of Figaro was a real tour de force.
4. Laissez-faire is a doctrine that holds that government should not interfere with trade.
5. The words antidote and anecdote are often confused.
6. Among Carol Shields' novels are The Stone Diaries and Larry's Party.
7. Words like mailman, policeman, and fireman have been replaced by non-sexist terms like mail carrier, police officer, and firefighter.
8. Herman Hesse's novel Siddhartha is a bildungsroman.
9. The musical West Side Story is a modern adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.
10. The words cool, awesome, and neat are just as valid for reacting to Michelangelo's David as are sublime, exquisite, and brilliant.

Quiz #16 – Using Italics

A. In the following sentences, circle the elements that should be italicized.

1. The Beatles' Abbey Road is one of my favorite recordings.
2. She left out an s and an i in her spelling of Mississippi.
3. Everyone in our French class thought our oral presentation was magnifique.
4. Romeo and Juliet are characters in Romeo and Juliet.
5. The correct designation for a writer of plays is playwright, literally "play maker."
6. My address has one 2, two 3s, and three 4s in it.
7. The Globe and Mail and the Washington Post report the same story quite differently.
8. The dictionary provides definitions of italic as an adjective and a noun.

#17 – Using Apostrophes

— Use an apostrophe to indicate that letters have been deliberately omitted (as in the case of contractions).

can't for **cannot**
don't for **do not**
won't for **will not**
I'll for **I will**
he'd for **he would**
she's for **she is**
they're for **they are**

— Use an apostrophe and an *s* to show possession in singular nouns and indefinite pronouns.

“The Monk’s Tale” is one of my favorite stories in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

When we would arrive at Dan’s house was anyone’s guess.

— To form the possessive case of a singular noun that ends with an *s*, add an apostrophe and another *s*.

Reading Henry James’s *The Ambassadors* wasn’t Thomas’s idea of fun.

— To form the possessive case of a plural noun that ends with an *s* or *es*, add only an apostrophe.

All off the students’ responses to *The Ambassadors* were recorded briefly in all of the teachers’ journals.

— To form the possessive case of a noun that has an irregular plural, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

I can endure the honking of one goose, but two geese’s honking is enough to drive me mad.

The children’s rooms were beautifully decorated.

— To form the possessive case of a compound word or word group, add an apostrophe and an *s*.

The editor-in-chief’s position is open.

The Secretary of State’s limousine was the next to arrive.

This is someone else’s responsibility.

— To indicate separate ownership of two or more items, apply the apostrophe and *s* to each owner.

Robertson Davies’s, Margaret Atwood’s, and Timothy Findlay’s writing styles vary greatly from one another.

— To indicate joint ownership of two or more items, apply the apostrophe and *s* only to the last item.

Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta *The Pirates of Penzance* is among the most well-known of the pair’s works.



Special note:

Here are two cases in which many students *mistakenly* use apostrophes.

— in forming plurals

Incorrect: The Thompson's are not at home.

Correct: The Thompsons are not at home.

Incorrect: The down jacket's were warm

Correct: The down jackets were warm.

— in forming the possessive case of the pronouns *his, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs*, and *whose*

Incorrect: **The books are his'.**
 The books are her's.
 The books are it's.
 The books are our's .
 The books are your's.
 The books are their's.
 Who's books are these?

Correct: **The books are his.**
 The books are hers.
 The books are its.
 The books are ours .
 The books are yours.
 The books are theirs.
 Whose books are these?

Exercise – Using Apostrophes

A. Add apostrophes where needed in each of the following sentences.

1. One of Simon and Garfunkels big hits was “The Sound of Silence.”
2. We especially like Billy Collins latest book of poems, *Nine Horses*.
3. Carly hasnt got time for the pain.
4. The citys main concern and my familys main concern are in direct opposition to one another.
5. The citys and my familys main concern is the same.
6. Randalls and Jess cars are here, but where is yours?
7. The three boys dogs toys were all thrown together into one bin.
8. The winter of 03 wasnt the worst on record.

Quiz #17 – Using Apostrophes

A. Add apostrophes where needed in each of the following sentences. In some cases, the addition or elimination of s's may be required.

1. In the autumn of 96, I turned 16.
2. Our class unit test is on Thursday, but theirs is on Wednesday. [i.e. the unit test of our class]
3. Idve guessed youd arrived by then.
4. Ours is not to reason why; ours is but to do or die.
5. The Three Stooges and The Marx Brothers comedies were wildly different in content and style.
6. James two brothers skis are still locked in the roof rack.
7. Romeos and Juliets love affair ends tragically.

#18 – Using Colons and Semi-colons

— A **semi-colon** stands for a stronger break in a sentence than a comma does, but not as complete a stop as a colon or period does. It is most commonly used to separate independent clauses that are closely related but not joined by a conjunction.

The apartment was vacant for months; no one would rent it.

The tornado spun brutally across the prairie; the Bensons' barn was swept away in an instant.

* When two independent clauses are joined by a linking (conjunctive) adverb—such as *however*, *accordingly*, *thus*, or *therefore*—a semi-colon follows the first clause, and a comma follows the linking adverb.

The daredevil survived the crash; however, he was never able to play the piano again.

The company showed a great profit this year; accordingly, the dividends will be passed on to our shareholders.

* Semi-colons are also used to separate phrases or clauses in a series where there are commas already appearing in one or more of those phrases or clauses.

The presenters included Adrienne Clarkson, Canada's Governor General; Thomas King, an Alberta author; and Lennie Gallant, a singer-songwriter from the Maritimes.

— A **colon** (or full colon) represents a more decisive break than a semi-colon, but not as complete as a period. Use a colon to introduce a series of items after a full sentence.

We have three key destinations: Dawson City, Whitehorse, and Anchorage.

* A colon can also be used to introduce a question or related statement after an independent clause.

Calvin had only one thought: He must win this race!

A burning question plagued Calvin all night: Would he win tomorrow's race?

Exercise – Using Colons and Semi-colons

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, inserting colons or semi-colons as needed.

1. The conference ends on Sunday thus, we will be expected at work on Monday.

2. At the auction, my aunt was interested in two items the four-poster bed and the hope chest.

3. Fiona told me not to stay in a hotel she suggested that I spend the night at her parents' home instead.

4. Remember to bring the following to the exam a pencil, a calculator, and a periodic table.

5. They were lost in the storm the car was stuck in deep drift.

6. Conferences were held in London, Ontario, on May 6, 1998 in Red Deer, Alberta, on June 8, 1999 and in Moncton, New Brunswick, on July 12, 2000.

7. Gavin suddenly remembered his father's stern command be home by 11:00 p.m!

8. I know the answer reverse the order of the independent and dependent clauses.

9. We'd hoped to complete the trek by noon however, the weather slowed us down considerably.

10. Leanne looked all over for just the right present she finally found it in a little out-of-the-way shop on Aspen Street.

Quiz #18 – Using Colons and Semi-colons

A. Rewrite each of the following sentences, inserting colons or semi-colons as needed.

1. I was almost positive I'd locked the door nevertheless, I returned to check

2. I'm stuck at home with a broken leg my heart, however, is out on the slopes.

3. These were Oscar Wilde's dying words "Either this wallpaper goes, or I do."

4. The idea behind this book is fresh and dramatic the prose style, though, is thoroughly uninspired.

5. Everyone zeroed in quickly on the source of the rancid odor my gym shoes.

6. We need to get milk, eggs, and bread therefore, we may as well go to the supermarket.
