

11¢ on Grammar

1. Omit **everything that is also known as** unnecessary words.
2. Make the subject and verb agree with each other, **NOT** with a word or phrase that comes between them.
{ex: The **leaves** of this **tree** **are** considered succulent.}
3. Use the active voice unless you specifically need to use the passive.
{ex: **ACTIVE**: Sally **walks** frequently. **PASSIVE**: Sally **is** a kind person.}
4. Use parallel construction to make a strong point and create a smooth flow.
verb adj. noun verb adj. noun
{ex: **Breathing** and **stretching** are important for **flexible muscles** and **good circulation**.}
gerund gerund adj. noun adj. noun
5. To indicate possession, end a singular noun or a plural noun that does NOT end in “s” with an apostrophe followed by an “s” {ex: dog’s house / children’s toys}
For plural nouns that end in “s,” simply add the apostrophe at the end of the word. {ex: dogs’ houses}
For Proper Nouns that end in “s,” add both the apostrophe and the “s” {ex: Charles Dickens’s house}
6. Join two independent clauses with either a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon alone.
{ex: He talks sometimes, **and** she always listens. / She talks to him often; he rarely listens.}
7. **When beginning a sentence with a phrase or a dependent clause**, include a comma after it.
8. Use commas to bracket phrases, **such as this one**, that are not essential to the sentence's meaning.
9. Do not use commas to bracket phrases **that are essential to a sentence's meaning**.
10. Be sure that a **pronoun**, a **participial phrase**, or an **appositive** refers clearly to the correct noun.
{ex: **Walking through the park**, **Scott**, **our neighbor**, notices **his** friend, Julia.}
part. subj. app. pro.
11. Quotation Marks and MLA Format:
 - If the material used to introduce the quotation ends in a form of "**thinks**," "**says**," or some other verb indicating expression, use a comma and begin the quote directly after.
{ex: Lao Tzu **asks**, "**D**o you want to improve the world?" (24).} The quote should start at the beginning of the speaker’s sentence and the first word of the quote should be capitalized.
 - If the quoted material is NOT the beginning of the speaker’s sentence, use an ellipsis and no capital OR capitalize the letter within brackets.
{ex: Marx writes, "**[. . .]** the labourers still form" (363). –or– Marx writes, "**[T]**he labourers . . . }
 - Otherwise, directly integrate the quote into your own sentence formation.
{ex: Darwin falsely believes that animals have a "**standard of beauty**" (568).}
 - Commas and Periods **ALWAYS** fall within the end quote. Semicolons and Colons do **NOT** unless they are part of the original quote. Question Marks and Exclamation Points should be included in the quote **ONLY** if it contains the entire question or exclamation.
{ex: Why does "being disarmed" make a difference (Machiavelli 38)? }
{ex: Smith requires that we "think before we act." – no page number reference available – }