

Major Sentence Faults

Fused sentences (fs). Do not join (“fuse”) independent clauses (in effect sentences) with no mark of punctuation. Use a semicolon if the ideas are closely related (see Semicolon); use a period if they are not.

Faulty:

I did not go to work today I was sick.

Correct:

I did not go to work today; I was sick.

Faulty:

The ship ran aground three miles upstream there seemed to be no way to get it afloat.

Correct:

The ship ran aground three miles upstream. There seemed to be no way to get it afloat.

Comma splice (cs). Do not join (“splice”) independent clauses (in effect, sentences) with a comma. Use a semicolon if the ideas are closely related (see Semicolon); use a period if they are not.

Faulty:

Do not take my word for it, ask him yourself.

Correct:

Do not take my word for it; ask him yourself.

Faulty:

The relationship between the auditor and the client is one of trust, that trust, indeed, should work both ways.

Correct:

The relationship between the auditor and the client is one of trust. That trust, indeed, should work both ways.

Sentence fragment (frag). Do not punctuate a phrase or a subordinate clause as a complete sentence. Join it to another sentence, or convert it to a complete sentence.

Faulty:

The work was not entirely satisfactory. Which is why they canceled the contract.

Correct:

The work was not entirely satisfactory, which is why they canceled the contract.

Faulty:

The issue was never presented to a jury. The case having been settled out of court.

Correct:

The issue was never presented to a jury. The case had been settled out of court.

Faulty:

The meeting was nearly unanimous in reaching a decision. Although those who disagreed were vocal in their opposition.

Correct:

The meeting was nearly unanimous in reaching a decision, although those who disagreed were vocal in their opposition.

Lack of agreement (agr). Do not use verbs or pronouns that do not agree in number with their subjects or antecedents.

Faulty:

Our choice of persons to attend the meetings were Miss Jones and Mr. Harris.

Correct:

Our choice of persons to attend the meetings was Miss Jones and Mr. Harris.

Faulty:

The committee was in a hurry to adjourn; they had already met for five hours.

Correct:

The committee was in a hurry to adjourn; it had already met for five hours.

Unclear reference (ref). Except for the expletive “it” as used in, “It is raining,” do not use a pronoun whose antecedent does not explicitly appear in the same sentence or the one immediately before.

Faulty:

Our company has a new tree-planting policy: they will be planted at 12-ft intervals.

Correct:

Our company has a new tree-planting policy: trees will be planted at 12-ft intervals.

Shift in tense (shift-t). Do not arbitrarily change (“shift”) verb tenses in mid-sentence (or between sentences).

Faulty:

We were racing to meet our deadline; suddenly, a new problem arises.

Correct:

We were racing to meet our deadline; suddenly, a new problem arose.

Shift in person (shift-p). Do not arbitrarily change (“shift”) the person of pronouns in mid-sentence (or between sentences).

Faulty:

One should always do the best you can.

Also faulty (because of the awkward “he or she”):

One should always do the best he or she can.

Correct:

People should always do the best they can.

Unparallel structure (/). Do not express comparable ideas in grammatical structures that are not alike.

Faulty:

The work of the department is (1) identifying problems, (2) some research on how to solve them, and (3) to recommend the best solution.

Correct:

The work of the department is (1) identifying problems, (2) investigating how to solve them, and (3) recommending the best solution.

Faulty:

Those working in the other lab not only finished their assignment, but ours as well.

Correct:

Those working in the other lab finished not only their assignment, but ours as well.

Dangling modifier (dang). Do not precede the subject of the sentence with a verbal element (participle, gerund, or infinitive) that does not employ the subject as the agent of the action of the implied verb.

Faulty:

Having heated the solution for three hours, a yellow precipitate had formed.

Correct:

After the solution had been heated for three hours, a yellow precipitate had formed.

Faulty:

After meeting for only 20 minutes, the committee's adjournment was announced.

Correct:

After meeting for only 20 minutes, the committee announced its adjournment.

Faulty:

To succeed in business, hard work is necessary.

Correct:

To succeed in business, one must work hard.

Misplaced modifier (mm). Do not place a modifier so far from the word it modifies as to cause confusion.

Faulty:

I like to listen to music with a good beat on the radio.

Correct:

I like to listen to radio music with a good beat.

Faulty:

The committee said not all of the staff was cooperating with its work at its last meeting.

Correct:

At its last meeting, the committee said not all of the staff was cooperating with its work.

Split Infinitives. Infinitives show no person, tense or aspect and usually occur with the word “to” (such as “to go”). A split infinitive places another work between the “to” and the verb.

Faulty:

To boldly go

Correct:

To go boldly

Punctuation

Comma (,)

1. Use commas after dependent clauses that introduce sentences.
 - After the lathe was repaired during the plant shutdown, it operated more smoothly.
2. Use commas after such introductory elements as nouns of address, transitional words, verbal phrases, and lengthy prepositional phrases.
 - Yes, the package has already been shipped.
 - Having explored the options available, the agency has decided on a new master plan.
 - Admittedly, the new traffic control system is very expensive, but the old system has become obsolete.
3. Use commas around parenthetical expressions, such as of course (unless one is replaced by a dash, semicolon, colon, or period).
 - There are many reasons, to be sure, why the project could not be completed on time.
 - The mosquito problem in this area has been intensified by certain weather conditions—namely, extreme heat and heavy rainfall.

Note: Treat the year in complete dates and the state name used with the city name as parenthetical.

- Chicago, Illinois, is the city where I was born.
- On January 1, 1900, the new century began.

Note: Use commas around conjunctive adverbs, such as however, unless adjacent to a semicolon.

- The result, however, was hard to predict.
- They worked hard; therefore, they succeeded.

4. Use commas to set off nonrestrictive appositives—that is, words, phrases, or clauses which are positioned next to a noun and which re-name the noun.
- Paraquat, a controversial pesticide, was recently used to destroy marijuana crops in Florida.
 - Many software programs are available for Apple, one of the most popular computers.

Note: If the appositive restricts or defines the meaning, do not use commas.

- The pesticide-paraquat-created controversy in Florida.

5. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for) to join two independent clauses.
- Some people cannot hear sounds at the normal low-frequency register, but they can hear dog whistles or other shrill noises.
 - France envisions extensive future uses for computers, and it has given terminals to many private citizens as a result.

Note: A conjunction must be used with the comma, since the comma is not strong enough to join the two clauses alone.

6. Use commas before trailing modification, nonrestrictive phrases or clauses that follow the main clause and end the sentence.
- We can leave or stay, depending on the weather.
 - I will support your program, although I do not agree with all of its details.

7. Use commas to set off items in a series.
- Some common computer languages are BASIC, FORTRAN, and Pascal.

Note: The comma before the word “and,” though optional, may be needed for clarity.

8. Use commas between pairs of adjectives that modify coordinately.
- He was a handsome, distinguished diplomat.

Note: This rule does not apply to series of adjectives in different categories. One can test for adjectives that modify coordinately by placing “and” between them or by revising the order. Coordinate adjectives should pass tests.

- On the corner stood a large-white-wooden house.
9. Use commas to set off direct quotations.
- The project director told his people, “The success of the undertaking depends on the cooperation of every employee.”

Semi-colon (;) and colon (:)

1. Use a semicolon to separate two related independent clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction.
- The aircraft company sent investigators to the site of the plane crash; the engine manufacturers sent a team as well.
 - Prices rose on the stock market; consequently, economists felt somewhat encouraged.
 - The meeting was scheduled for tomorrow; however, it had to be postponed.
2. Use a semicolon to connect series of elements which already contain commas.
- The speakers came from Portland, Oregon; from Austin, Texas; and from Newark, New Jersey.
 - The schedule for graduate-exam workshops is as follows: January, the GRE; February, the LSAT; and April, the GMAT.
3. Use a colon only at the end of a completed, independent clause, which explicitly anticipates that something else is to follow. What follows may be a single word or phrase, a series of elements, a new independent clause, or a formal quotation.
- The result came after six months’ hard work: a successful campaign.
 - Computer classes will be offered on the following topics this fall: the uses of microcomputers, the development of software, and a review of computer languages.
 - The learning disability dyslexia afflicted several famous Americans: Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and Nelson Rockefeller.
 - In deciding where to open the branch, management must consider several factors: they must evaluate not only the costs of moving to a particular region, but also the possibilities for future expansion.
 - Pascal’s observation on atheism is thought provoking: “Atheism is a sign of mental strength, but only up to a certain point.”
 - The following remarks concluded the president’s report to the board:
All in all it has been a good year for the Corporation. We accomplished the major goals established in our reorganization plan of last year. We expect to move forward from this base and make next year the finest in the history of the Corporation.

Note: Colons cannot be used after a to be verb or between a verb or preposition and its object. Colons would be incorrect if used in the following sentences:

- The carpenter brought his own hammer, saw and sliderule.

- Participants at the exhibit will be Rodney Schmitt, Harry Kettler, and Abby Bryan.
- For the conference, we ordered a large supply of paper, pencils, and erasers.

Apostrophe (‘)

1. Use an apostrophe in a contraction to show omitted letters.
 - it’s = it is
 - who’s = who is
 - they’ll = they will
 - aren’t = are not
2. Use apostrophes with nouns to show possession. With singular nouns and plural nouns not ending in an s, place the apostrophe before the s to show possession. With plural nouns ending in s place the apostrophe afterward.
 - This auto company’s losses greatly exceeded other companies’ losses.
 - The men’s concern was that the negotiations would drag on too long.
 - Business’s
 - Charles’s

Note: Never use apostrophes with personal pronouns to show possession. Words such as who’s or it’s mean who is and it is.

Note: In a formal title, the apostrophe is sometimes omitted.

- Citizens Crime Watch Neighborhood
- Boys Club

Note: In the past, apostrophes were used before the letter s to indicate the plurals of letters, figures, and words used as words. That usage is no longer standard.

- His 5s resembled ss.
- The event occurred in the 1970s.
- There are a number of new VCRs on the market.
- How many ands occur in the following passage?

Hyphen (-) Usage varies. It is best to check a reliable dictionary if in doubt. Generally, the following rules are followed.

1. Use hyphens to join two or more words functioning as a single adjective before a noun (a unit modifier).
 - well-known surgeon
 - a ten-year-old canary

Note: Cumbersome compounds can be avoided by rephrasing the sentence and selecting different words.

- He had a cat-that-had-swallowed-a-canary look.

- He looked like a cat that had swallowed a canary.

Note: Suspended hyphens are used to link coordinated prefixes to the word they modify.

- pre- and post-test
- first-, second- and third-class seats

Note: Hyphens are not used between adverbs ending in -ly and adjectives. An adjective may be joined to an -ly adverb, however.

- quick-wittedly and half-heartedly

2. Use hyphens with spelled out compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine employed as nouns or adjectives.

- The twenty-first and ninety-second runners were there.

Note: When a fraction serves as a compound modifier and is spelled out, a hyphen is necessary.

- one-half full
- two-thirds of a page

3. Use hyphens when figures or letters are used as prefixes, as well as with zip codes with more than five digits.

- 24-hour period mid-1980s
- T-shirt
- Dallas, TX 75392-0041

4. Generally do not use hyphens to form prefixes unless there is internal capitalization (pre-Cambrian) or ambiguous pronunciation (re-sign but resign) or meaning (re-form)

- anti-Russian mid-August

Note: Use hyphens, however, with the prefixes ex (“former”), self- and all- and with the suffix -elect.

- ex-wife
- self-conscious
- all-American
- President-elect

Note: When a prefix ends and the root word begins with the same letter, hyphens are sometimes used.

- anti-independent
- re-elect
- shell-like
- semi-inflationary

* Do not use a hyphen with words such as cooperate.

5. Use hyphens with words such as in-law and great, but not with grand or step.
 - grandfather
 - stepmother
 - father-in-law
 - great-grandmother

6. Use a hyphen to form double nouns, that is two or more comparable nouns joined together, or when the preposition to or through is omitted from similar forms.
 - composer-conductor
 - AFL-CIO
 - A-Z
 - 100-200

7. Consult a dictionary to determine whether compound nouns (nounadjective combinations) are written as one word or two, or are hyphenated.
 - hairpin
 - hair piece
 - hair-raiser

Note: The hyphenated forms are rare; when in doubt use two words or one.

8. Consult a dictionary to determine whether compound verbs are written as one word or are hyphenated.
 - to dry-clean
 - dry cleaner
 - to wet-nurse
 - wet nurse
 - to red-pencil
 - corrected with a red pencil

Parentheses (())

1. Use parentheses to set off parenthetical, supplementary, or sometimes illustrative matter. Any normal punctuation within a sentence containing parentheses should go outside of the parentheses.
 - From the start of the Industrial Revolution, working women (most of whom were young and single) were paid at lower wages than men.
 - Although working women have banded together (up to a point), their working conditions have not substantially changed over the years.

2. Use parentheses to enclose figures or letters employed for enumeration and the first use of an acronym to be used subsequently in a paper.
 - Computer-Aided Design (CAD)
 - Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAM)
 - Old English has five cases: (1) nominative, (2) accusative, (3) genitive, (4) dative, and (5) instrumental.

Note: The and precedes the last parenthetical number in the series.

3. Use parentheses to contain references for citations to a bibliography, reference list, or works-cited section. These parentheses should be outside of the quote, but inside the sentence if the citation is not indented (outside the sentence with indented quotes). The elements included within the parentheses depend upon the reference system used.
 - Sherman and Johnson in *Modern Technical Writing* state that “A question mark enclosed in parentheses is used to express doubt” (442).
 - Gipson and Saulander (1977) concluded that
 - [block quote] Out of the mud two strangers came
And caught me splitting wood in the yard. (3)

Dashes (—)

1. Use dashes (represented by two successive hyphens) for setting off an internal parenthetical expressions—such as a series—that markedly interrupts the flow of the sentence or that itself contains internal commas. Occasionally, a dash is used before a terminal appositive instead of a comma. (In informal writing, but usually not in most business or technical writing, dashes often substitute for colons or semicolons.)
 - A large number of PCs—no one can say exactly how many—are in use in the United States today.
 - A number of macrocomputers—the Apple, the personal IBM, and the TRS 80—have been installed in the laboratory.
 - Richard E. Orville wrote, “Lightning is an electrical discharge—an enormous spark.”

Quotation marks (“ “)

1. Use quotation marks to enclose all directly quoted material; not citing such material results in plagiarism. Quotation marks always occur in pairs: one set opening and one closing. Use a quotation only when your own words will not do the job as well and then use only the bare minimum. The first word of a quoted sentence is always capitalized.
 - “Mishkin and Appenzeller’s article, ‘The Anatomy of Memory,’” he said, “mentions the function of physostigmine.”

Note: Single quotes are used inside quotations where double quotations marks would otherwise be used.

Note: Long quotes (more than four lines) are indented ten spaces from the left margin. These are not placed in quotation marks.

2. Use quotations marks for minor titles (articles in periodicals and newspapers, songs, short stories and poems, TV and radio episodes) and subdivisions of books. Italics or

underlining (depending on reference style used), on the other hand, is used for major titles (books, magazines, newspaper, TV and radio series, record albums), foreign words, and the names of specific ships, airplanes, satellites, spacecraft and art works.

- W. Daniel Hillis wrote “The Connection Machine” for *Scientific American*.
- “The Tribbles” is an episode of *Star Trek*.
- Poe’s “The Raven” appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

3. Place a period or a comma inside closing quotation marks.

- “Sally,” he said, “get lost.”

Note: The comma before the second opening quotation is outside the quotation marks.

Note: Commas do not set off a quotation if it blends directly into the regular structure of the sentence.

- He said that “drought by itself does not determine whether there will be a famine.”

Note: Colons introduce a quotation following a completed clause.

- He concluded as follows: “Until the shape of a conical volcano has been degraded”

4. Place a colon or a semicolon outside the closing quotation marks.

- She asked about the heroine of the poem with the lines “in this kingdom by the sea”; however, I could only recall one character from “Annabel Lee”: the narrator.

5. Place a question mark or exclamation point inside the closing quotation marks if it applies to the quoted material, outside if it applies to the sentence as a whole.

- Pilate asked, “What is truth?”
- What is the meaning of “connecting two tetrahedrons by means of an octahedron”?

6. Use quotation marks to indicate a special or unusual sense of a word.

- He did not “officially” approve the decision.

Note: This usage is best kept to a minimum. Try to select the right word or phrase so you do not need to indicate a “special” usage.

Note: Double quotation marks (not single ones) are used in this case as with quoted words.

Special punctuation with quotations

1. Use ellipsis points (. . .) to mark an omission from a quoted passage.

- He asserted, “Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard . . . ; but . . . the cupboard was bare” (28).

Note: Ellipses rarely start a quotation.

- “[N]ever send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”
2. Use square brackets ([]) to enclose extraneous material inserted into a quoted passage.
 - “[I]t [the bell] tolls for thee.”
 - Four score and seven [87] years ago.”

Usage

Numbers

1. Write numbers that are 10 or above as figures.

Note: Numbers that are rough estimates are written as words and are rounded off.

- The college was about two hundred years old.

Note: Numbers that introduce sentences are written as words.

- Three thousand people attended the rally.

2. Write numbers that are below 10 as words except in the following instances:
 - a) when they come before a measurement unit such as in 7 ft
 - b) when a number is grouped within a phrase containing another number. (Either the first one or the shorter one is then spelled out.)
 - one 4-unit apartment building
 - two 12-hour shifts
 - c) when numbers occur in a series, any one of which is 10 or above.
 - The committee consisted of 13 housewives, 4 blue-collar workers, 9 lawyers, and 3 senior citizens.
3. Write numbers denoting money and dates as figures.
 - He gave me a receipt for \$9.00.
 - On July 4, 1982, the Space Shuttle made the last of its test flights.

Note: Months are written out as words.

4. Use a mixed form for two- or three-digit approximations in the millions or billions.
 - \$45 million 2.5 billion people
 - 115 million 3.56 million

Note: Very rough approximations are spelled out.

- about three million people

Note: Precise members are given in full as figures.

- 2,536,413

5. When using decimals in which there is not an integer, place a zero before the decimal point.
 - 0.125

6. When a fraction is to be taken as a rough approximation, spell it out; otherwise, give it as figure.
 - We removed about one half the fluid.
 - The aperture measures 1/2 in. in diameter.

Abbreviation (ab)

Note the customary abbreviations in your field and use accordingly. If you are not certain your reader will understand the abbreviation, spell the term out. The following rules will generally be helpful.

1. Abbreviate measurement units following figures:

- 15 cc
- 80 ft
- 4 gal

Note: Do not abbreviate these terms unless they follow a figure.

- He poured the chemical into a gallon container.

2. For a unit of measurement, express the abbreviation in the singular.

- 4 ft
- 5 lb

3. Except where clarity is a problem, omit the period after the abbreviation of a measure.

- 85 hp
- 15 cc

Note: Do not omit the period after an abbreviation such as in. (for inch), which could be confused with the word in.

4. Do not abbreviate certain short measurement terms including day, acre, mile, rod, per, ton. However, note particular exceptions which might occur in your field.

5. Do not omit the period after commonly abbreviated words such as a.m., ibid., or Fig.

6. Express abbreviations in letters or in symbols when common to your field, but be consistent.

- Of those responding to the ad, 22% were timbermen and 16% were hay farmers.

Note: Do not write two forms of the same measurement in one sentence.

- Of the total group 22% were engineers and 16 percent business students.
- The cost was \$515.00, but shipping alone was 245 dollars, nearly half the total.

7. When using an acronym, (an abbreviation made up of the first letters of the words comprising an expression) omit the period and space after each letter:

- COBOL
- UNESCO
- FAA

Note: When such acronyms become accepted as common nouns, write them in lower case.

- laser
- scuba
- radar

Note: When a long title or other expression unfamiliar to the audience is to be used frequently, spell it out on the first mention in the text and include the abbreviation parenthetically. Then, use only the abbreviation throughout the article. Capitalize the acronym whether or not the original term is capitalized.

- All his Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) scores were above average. He took the DAT as a senior in high school.
- Many computer science students are intensely interested in computer assisted design (CAD). Students interested in CAD . . .

8. Spell out geographical location names including streets, cities, states, regions, and countries. Exceptions include long, multiword names (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., etc.) and Postal Service abbreviations for states (FL, GA, etc.) used in business correspondence. Do not punctuate postal service abbreviations.

Capitalization (cap)

1. Capitalize all proper nouns, including personal names, geographic names, or official titles of organizations.
 - Ford Motor Company
 - House of Representatives
 - a famous observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona
 - Mount Wilson Observatory in California

Note: When two or more proper nouns precede a term such as lake, bay, or street, the term is NOT capitalized.

- Okeechobee and Santa Fe lakes
- Lake Okeechobee

2. Capitalize titles which precede the individual, but generally not titles which follow unless they are especially distinguished.
 - Allen B. Smith, professor of economics
 - Professor Allen B. Smith
 - Dr. Henry Wallace, a specialist in preventive medicine
 - Henry Wallace, a doctor specializing in preventive medicine

Note: An exception to this rule occurs with presidents

- President George W. Bush
 - George W. Bush, President of the United States
3. Capitalize the first word of sentences and of direct quotes unless the quote merges with the structure of the original sentence.
 - According to an article in *Scientific American*, “GM is the nation’s largest single user of robots, with some 1,700 on duty” (3).
 - Robots are “a triumph of engineering, an adroit marriage of linkages, gearings, and bearings” (4).
 4. Capitalize the words Figure, Table, Volume, and Number when they are part of titles.
 - Table 3
 - Figure 9
 5. Capitalize the important words in the title of a book, magazine, or article.
 - *The Practical Craft: Readings for Business and Technical Writers*
 - “Industry Views the Teaching of English”

Note: The “the” is capitalized if it is the first word in a book title but NOT if it is the beginning of a newspaper or magazine title.

- the *New York Times*
- *The Complete Stylist and Handbook*

6. Capitalize precise course titles, especially when followed by a number; general course descriptions are NOT capitalized.
 - I am taking technical writing this term.
 - I am taking Technical Writing 2210 this term.

Note: Language names are always capitalized.

- I am taking Russian 101, but my roommate is taking first-year German.

Italicization (ital)

1. Italicize titles of books, magazines, newspapers, journals, TV and radio series, record albums, artworks, ships, satellites, and spacecraft.
 - *The Random House College Dictionary*

Note: The word “the” before a newspaper or periodical is not italicized.

- the *Wall Street Journal*

2. Italicize words, figures, and letters which are singled out as words, figures, and letters.
 - I always leave out the second *t* in omitted.
 - The first 3 and final 2 were illegible.

Note: Do not italicize a letter used to indicate a shape.

- The auditorium is L-shaped.

3. Italicize foreign words or phrases, including the binomial nomenclature in biology, unless those terms are an accepted part of English.
 - Man, *Homo sapiens*, is the only living species of the genus, *Homo*.
 - He objected to changing the status quo.
4. Italicize certain words for clarity or for emphasis. Use italics for this purpose sparingly.

Note: Do not italicize or put in quotes your own title in its primary use.

Spelling (sp)

Since spelling problems are highly individual, the best way to improve spelling is to keep a record, for study and reference, of misspelled words. If in doubt about a spelling, a reliable standard dictionary should provide the correct form(s).

Note: Some commonly confused words are listed below:

- accept, except
- its, it's
- affect, effect
- leads, led
- choose, chose
- their, there, they're
- stationary, stationery
- personal, personnel
- precede, proceed
- weather, whether
- who's, whose
- complement, compliment

The following general rules should help deal with certain problems.

i before e

1. When the pronunciation is long e, put i before e except after c; Place an e before i after c.
 - believe
 - receive
 - weigh
 - chief
 - conceit
 - neighbor
 - field

- ceiling
- foreign

Note: Exceptions to this rule include: either, neither, seize, leisure, financier, species

Suffixes

1. Drop the -e before a suffix beginning with a vowel, but retain the -e before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

- scarce, scarcity
 - age, aging
 - manage, management
 - sincere, sincerely
- options:** likable or likeable

exceptions: acreage, mileage, judgment, argument, ninth, truly, duly, awful

Note: To keep the sound /s/ of -ce or /j/ of -ge, keep the final e before -able, -ous, or -ance.

- courageous
- noticeable
- changeable
- vengeance

2. When a suffix beginning with a vowel is added to a word ending in a consonant, double the final consonant of the word under the following conditions: the word must end in only one consonant, be preceded by only one vowel, and be accented on the last syllable.

Final consonant doubled:

- occur, occurred
 - begin, beginning
 - refer, referred
 - stop, stopped
- exception:** gas, gases, gaseous

Final consonant not doubled:

- rent, renting (word ends in two consonants)
- read, reading (two vowels precede the consonant)
- offer, offered (accent shifted back to an earlier syllable)

3. When a suffix is added to a word that ends in y preceded by a consonant, change to i unless the result would be double i. However, when a suffix is added to a word that ends in y preceded by a vowel, retain the y unchanged.

- worry, worried, worrying
- hurry, hurried
- accompany, accompaniment

exceptions: slyness, citylike, secretaryship

Plurals

1. Routinely form plurals by adding -s to the singular.
 - The Dudleys
 - sisters-in-law
2. With nouns ending in f or fe, change the ending to ve before adding the s.
 - leaves
 - knives
3. With nouns ending in s, ch, sh, or x, form plurals by adding -es.
 - losses
 - approaches
4. With nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant, add -es after changing the y to i.
 - eighties
 - industries
 - companies
5. With nouns ending in o preceded by a consonant, form plurals by adding s or es depending on the word (consult a dictionary).
 - echoes
 - heroes
 - vetoes
 - autos
 - memos
 - pros
 - zeros/zeroes
 - mottos/mottoes
6. With many words retaining foreign spellings, plurals are not formed by adding -s or -es.
 - women
 - geese
 - data
 - memoranda
 - analyses
 - algae
 - phenomena (phenomenon)

Definitions

Adjective

An adjective modifies a noun. It describes the quality, state or action that a noun refers to

Rules:

Adjectives can come before nouns: a new car

Adjectives can come after verbs such as be, become, seem, look, etc.: that car looks fast

They can be modified by adverbs: a very expensive car

They can be used as complements to a noun: the extras make the car expensive

Adverb

Most adverbs in English are formed by adding -ly to an adjective. An adverb is a word that modifies the meaning of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a noun or noun phrase, a numeral, a pronoun, or a prepositional phrase and can sometimes be used as a complement of a preposition.

Spelling Notes:

Adjectives ending in l still take -ly; careful → carefully.

Adjectives ending in y change to -ily; lucky → luckily

Adjectives ending in ble change to -bly; responsible → responsibly

Clause

A Clause is a part of a sentence that usually contains a subject and a verb. A clause is not a complete sentence on its own and is usually connected to the other part of the sentence by a conjunction. However, an independent clause can exist as a sentence.

Gerund

The Gerund form of a verb is formed by adding ing to the end.

Mood

The mood shows the attitude of the speaker or the writer to the action or state described by the verb. The Indicative is used in ordinary statements and questions, the Imperative is used to command and the Subjunctive is used to express doubt.

Participle

English has two participles. The present participle is formed by adding ing while the past participle is formed by adding ed to the end of the verb.