

How to Teach the Set of Instructions Composition Project in 8 Classes

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Introduction

This document describes a composition project that I have successfully used during my years of teaching at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. The composition project is to write a Set of Instructions that gives the reader information that the reader can use. This is practical writing, as opposed to academic research papers that teachers grade and return to their students. Sets of Instructions tell readers information that the readers do not already know but that the readers would like to know and use. Academic research papers tend to tell the readers—teachers—information that the teachers already know. Academic research papers tend not to have information that the readers can use in their own lives.

When I teach the Set of Instructions Project, I often teach it before I teach the Manual Project because I allow my students to put their Set of Instructions in their Manual, if the Set of Instructions is relevant. (All students have to write at least 10 new pages whether or not their Set of Instructions appears in their Manual.) However, sometimes I do not teach the Manual Project, meaning that the Set of Instructions Project can be a stand-alone project.

I emphasize that students should write a Set of Instructions that they can add to their writing portfolio and can use to get an internship or entry-level job. Students tend to work very hard on their Set of Instructions because they are writing for their writing portfolios and for a real audience. Yes, they will hand in their Set of Instructions to the teacher to be graded, but instead of regarding the teacher as the sole reader they think in terms of a real audience with real readers.

Teachers are welcome to evaluate this assignment to see if they want to use it in their own classes. Teachers are welcome to adapt this assignment as desired.

Free Resources

Be aware that you can go to Lulu.com and download these relevant documents as free pdfs:

Composition Project: Writing a Set of Instructions

<http://www.lulu.com/product/file-download/composition-project-writing-a-set-of-instructions/15971104>

Composition Project: Writing a Manual

<http://www.lulu.com/product/file-download/composition-project-writing-a-manual/6357440>

Teaching the Manual Project in 8 Classes

<http://www.lulu.com/product/file-download/teaching-the-manual-project-in-8-classes/16071519>

These documents include samples of my students' work. Other free documents for teachers and student are available at my storefront at Lulu.com:

<http://stores.lulu.com/bruceb>

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Class 1: The Set of Instructions Project: Assign the Project

Homework Due in Class 3: Hand in a typed 1-page memo telling me briefly about the topic and audience of your Set of Instructions. Tell me briefly about the visual aids you plan to use in your Set of Instructions. (Will they be photographs, screen shots, drawings, etc.? Don't use the word "picture" because a "picture" can be many things.) Proofread carefully.

Sample Homework Memo:

To: David Bruce
From: Alison Goodstudent (MW 9-11)
Date: 5/7/10
Re: Set of Instructions Memo

I am a Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences major and the knowledge of how to give a diagnostic analysis will be very useful for my career field. I plan to work as a Speech-Language Pathologist, and I will need to know (and do know) how to give a proper diagnostic analysis to assess a variety of speech problems.

For my Set of Instructions paper, I will be writing step-by-step instructions for how to give a diagnostic analysis to assess speech problems with international students. I will be writing these instructions specifically for the ELIP Pronunciation Lab where I work, and the instructions will be intended for the audience of new tutors who are learning how to do this job. I have worked at the lab for a full year and understand how to give a proper diagnostic to the students, but when I first started I would have appreciated more guidance on the subject.

This topic will not only benefit new tutors whom I work with, but it will also look impressive to my supervisor and could look impressive in a writing portfolio for my future career. I also plan to give a copy of the Set of Instructions to my supervisor, and I will mention in my resume having written this Set of Instructions for the ELIP Pronunciation Lab where I work.

I will be using one screenshot and many photographs that I take at the ELIP Pronunciation Lab for my visual aids.

Advice for Writing

- **Do it yourself.**

Early in their career, the Ramones played in London on July 4, 1976. Some cool kids who called themselves The Clash hung around during a sound check before the concert and talked to the members of the band, mentioning that they played music but weren't good enough to play in public. Johnny Ramone told them, "Are you kidding? I hope you're coming tonight. We're lousy. We can't play. If you wait until you can play, you'll be too old to get up there. We stink, really. But it's great." (This is a great example of punk rock's do-it-yourself attitude. You don't need a lot of fancy equipment to play music. Just teach yourself a few chords, get up on stage, and rock. Similarly, if you want to write, you don't need a lot of fancy equipment. If you have a computer, great, but all you really need is some paper and a pencil.)

- **Be there.**

After retiring from her career in dance, Balanchine dancer Barbara Milberg became a very good student—and eventually a Ph.D. (and professor). In dance, she had learned that when the curtain went up, she had better be there, and so she never handed in a paper late.

- **Get it right.**

A man—who didn't dance—visited the dance class of Margaret Craske. At the end of her class, he said goodbye and jokingly executed a *port de bras*. Quickly, Ms. Craske reached out and corrected the position of the visitor's hand. As you would expect, in her dance classes, she tells her students over and over, "Get it right!"

- **Do it 'til you get it right.**

Garth Fagan, the choreographer of the theatrical version of *The Lion King*, learned an important lesson from Martha Graham: "Do it 'til you get it right!" She requested that he simply walk across the floor. He walked across the floor 12 times before he realized that she wanted a walk that did not say, "LOOK AT ME! AREN'T I GORGEOUS!" When he did the walk correctly, Ms. Graham told him, "I think you're going to go places." As the head of his own dance troupe and as a Broadway choreographer, he did.

- **Rise above.**

Theater director Tyrone Guthrie advised his actors and crew to do this. The advice means to rise above whatever forces are working against you. All of us have personal problems. No one's life is perfect. Sometimes, life seems to conspire against us. Rise above all that, and produce the best work you can.

What Do I Have to Do for the Set of Instructions Project?

Teacher's Expectations

What are your teacher's expectations for the Set of Instructions?

- You will start writing this Set of Instructions at least five days before the Peer Review Session.
- You will spend at least six hours on this paper.
- You will revise this Set of Instructions at least once.
- You will bring a good, complete, typed draft to the peer review session.
- You will get feedback on your Set of Instructions during the peer review session.
- You will get feedback on your Set of Instructions essay from at least one other person outside of class.
- You will proofread this Set of Instructions at least three times.
- You will run a spelling check on the final draft of your Set of Instructions.

Benefits

Instructions are frequently needed on the job. You will learn how to write a good Set of Instructions. Your Set of Instructions will probably be much better than many of the Instructions you find when you purchase a product. You will also learn how to create good visual aids and how to test your Set of Instructions. If your Set of Instructions turns out well, you can add it to your writing portfolio and show it to prospective employers during job interviews or you may be able to use your Set of Instructions to help you get into graduate school. If your Set of Instructions turns out well, the person you wrote them for may be willing to write you a very good letter of recommendation. You may want to ask your advisor or a trusted professor in your area of study for ideas about topics for this assignment. You may also be able to mention your Set of Instructions in your Resume. For example: "Wrote Set of Instructions on 'How to Open Restaurant XYZ.'" Or: "Wrote manual on 'How to Exercise with Arthritis.'"

Instructions Assignment

- Write a Set of Instructions that will enable your readers to operate some device or perform some procedure, preferably used in your major, in your future career, or at work.
- The procedure must involve at least **24 steps**.
- Your Instructions must include **an introduction** in which you motivate the reader to use the Instructions.
- Your Instructions must contain **at least one visual aid that you will create (no photocopies of a visual aid that someone else has created)**. You can't copy your visual aids from a book, magazine article, or other source. Anyone who does this and does not give credit to the source is guilty of plagiarism.
- Your visual aid may be a photograph(s), drawing(s) or something you create on a computer. If your visual aid is a photograph, you can be either the photographer or the model. If your Instructions explain how to fill out forms, your visual aids can be the forms.
- In some cases, I may allow a student to use a visual aid downloaded from the WWW, as long as 1) **the student gets permission from me to do this ahead of time**, 2) **the student gives credit to the source**, and 3) **the student also creates at least one original visual aid**. I will

allow downloads that show a piece of equipment (e.g., a computer or a camera), but I will not allow downloads that show how to perform the steps—you need to create those visual aids.

- Your Instructions must be on something that can be **tested**, preferably with a performance test. You can use both a performance test and an understandability test if you wish.
- You **cannot** elaborate on a Set of Instructions that you have found in a textbook; e.g., extracting caffeine from tea, performing a fractional distillation, etc. However, you can write a Set of Instructions on a procedure that you know well and have not found in a textbook; e.g., extracting caffeine from tea, performing a fractional distillation, etc. (I hope this is clear: Do something that you know well and do not already have instructions for.)

Audience

The readers of your Set of Instructions will be people who do not know how to do the procedure that you are writing about, but who do want to know how to do that procedure. How will they get copies of your Set of Instructions? If you wish, you can make your Set of Instructions a free download on <Lulu.com>. Or you can simply print off copies for friends who want a copy.

Advice

- **Students in technical or computer majors should choose a technical or computer topic.**
- I advise you to create a Set of Instructions that you can talk about in a job interview; in other words, write Instructions explaining how to use a piece of equipment commonly used in your major, or write about some procedure used on the job. This project can be as technical as you want to make it.
- Be aware that you can take a writing portfolio along to a job interview. If your Instructions turn out well, you can put them in your portfolio and show them to prospective employers.
- When thinking of topics for your Instructions, think in terms of problem-solving. Can you write something that will solve a problem? Perhaps new people at work can't perform a certain procedure. Perhaps you can write something that a professor can use as a class handout for students to refer to.
- When thinking of topics for your Instructions, see if you can write something that will result in a letter of job recommendation for you. If you write something for work or if you write something that a professor can use as a class handout, your manager or professor may be willing to write an excellent letter of job recommendation for you.

Do NOT Choose a Topic That Needs Guidelines Rather Than Step-by-Step Directions

- NO: How to Buy a Car.
- NO: How to Play Cricket.
- NO: How to Study for a Test.
- NO: How to Create a Business Plan.

Sample Unacceptable Instruction Topics

- NO: Recipes (including Recipes for Drinks).
- NO: How to Play a Drinking Game.
- NO: How to Write a Computer Program.
- NO: Origami.

- NO: How to Fill Out the Application Form for a Passport. (The instructions are already on the form.)
- NO: How to Make a Cornhole Game Set and Cornhole Bags.
- NO: How to Read Music.
- NO: How to Produce a Fashion Show.
- NO: How to Execute the Triple-Option Offense. (This isn't a good topic for a Set of Instructions because several actions happen all at the same time instead of sequentially. In a Set of Instructions, the reader does one thing, then the reader does another thing. In a football play, lots of people are doing things all at the same time.)
- NO: How to Have a Good Weekend Trip in Niagara Falls, Canada. (However, you can create a Set of Instructions on how to pack for a weekend trip to Niagara Falls, Canada.)
- NO: Something for which you already have a Set of Instructions (operating a clock-radio, or programming a VCR)—including Instructions from a professor and including computer games.
- NO: How to Field Dress a Deer. Ask yourself how you would get original photographs for this topic. Most people are not good enough artists to draw the steps of this procedure competently, and I will not allow you to download the photographs for this procedure. After all, if the photographs are available online, so are the steps.
- NO: How to Shoot a Free Throw. NO: How to Swing a Golf Club. The problem here is that these things would be taught through coaching rather than reading. Also, although you can get 24 steps for these procedures, that would be a bad idea. You don't want a player on the free-throw line at the end of a close game thinking, "I can't remember step 22!"
- NO: How to Play a Video Game.

Some Advice

- Some procedures are difficult to write about because they should be learned through coaching, not through reading a Set of Instructions. Be very careful when writing about a procedure in sports. Don't write about these topics: How to Shoot a Free Throw and How to Swing a Golf Club.
- When a procedure is obvious, don't write a Set of Instructions for it. For example, if you are writing about filling out a form on the WWW, you probably will not have to write steps for "Fill in your name" and "Fill in your street address" and "Fill in your town or city" and "Fill in your zip code" and "Fill in your home area code" and "Fill in your home telephone number," etc. Instead, you may simply write, "Fill in your personal information," then move on. Of course, if the entire procedure is obvious, even to someone who has never done the procedure before, you should choose a different topic.

Sample Acceptable Instructions Topics

Note: Do not plagiarize this assignment. Chose a procedure that you already know how to do well.

- **Instructions on a technical topic.**

Ex: How to Make Gunpowder. How to Install a MOD Chip in Your Game Station. How to Add Memory to Your PC. How to Take an X-ray. How to Perform a Neutralization Titration.

- **Instructions related to your career/major.**

Ex: How to Create a Flats Library. (Fashion merchandisers use Flats Libraries.) How to Take Blood Pressure. How to Care for a Sprained Ankle. How to Perform Exercises That Help People with Arthritis. How to Clean and Maintain a Flute. How to Find a Terrapin Turtle Nesting Site. How to Calculate a Mean Length of Utterance (MLU). How to Hang and Circuit a Theatrical Ellipsoidal Reflector Spotlight. How to Assess a Stroke Patient. (The stroke patient Set of Instructions was written by a student majoring in speech-language pathology.) How to Perform a Column Chromatography. How to Classify Soils. How to Repair a Pitching Surface. How to Test Your Blood Glucose Level. How to Perform a Skinfold Caliper Test. How to Perform Calculations Involving the Time Value of Money. How to Expose Latent Fingerprints. How to Create a HDR Panorama.

- **Instructions on how to use a computer.**

Note: For computer Instructions, you should know how to create screen shots. Also, you should write for a particular version of a program; e.g. Solid Edge 19.)

Note: Computer program tutorials work well for this assignment; for example, a student can write a tutorial that teaches engineering students how to use a particular CAD program to draw a bolt or other simple item.

Ex: How to Create, Modify, and Paste Screen Shots. How to Send Virtual Flowers. How to Perform a Linear Regression Using Excel 2008 for Mac. How to Buy Sports Tickets Online. How to Make a Floor Plan in AutoCAD 2008. How to Perform a Structural Analysis Using MathCAD 18.

- **Instructions that can be used at work.**

Ex: How to Close (or Open) the Store. How to Clean the Kitchen Area. How to Wait on Customers. How to Write a Parking Ticket. How to Operate the Super Shot 200D. (The Super Shot 200D is used to repair cracks on roads.)

- **Instructions related to car or truck or motorcycle maintenance.**

Ex: How to Change the Oil. How to Fix a Flat Tire. How to Rotate Tires. How to Check Car Fluids. How to Perform a Safety Inspection of Your Motorcycle.

- **Instructions on home improvement projects.**

Ex: How to Finish a Kitchen Cabinet. How to Paint a Room. How to Re-Pot House Plants. How to Line a Chest with Cedar. How to Patch a Drywall Hole.

- **Instructions for exercise equipment or for warming up and stretching.**

Ex: How to Use an Ergometer. How to Use the Ping Center Climbing Wall. How to Lift Weights. How to Stretch Properly. How to Warm Up and Cool Down Properly. How to Perform a Vertical Jump Test. How to Properly Perform the Pilates Series of Five.

- **Instructions that can be used in the library.**

Ex: How to Use OhioLINK.

- **Instructions, including fundraising instructions, that can be used in a fraternity, sorority, club sport, or other campus organization.**

Ex: How to Hold the Annual “Have-a-Heart” Valentine’s Day Bake Sale. A Team Captain’s Guide to Participating in Relay for Life.

- **Instructions that can be used at home.**

Ex: How to Diaper a Young Child. How to Give a Baby a Bath. How to Baby-Proof a Home. How to Clean a Bathroom.

- **Instructions on personal hygiene.**

Ex: How to Give Yourself a Manicure. How to Trim Hair. How to Apply Makeup. How to Decorate Your Body Using Henna.

- **Instructions on an arts and crafts or other project.**

Ex: How to Make a Scrunchi. How to Build a Campfire. How to Make Paper. How to Make a Scrapbook. How to Prepare a Market Steer for the Show Ring. How to Make a Denim Bookbag Out of an Old Pair of Jeans. How to Wrap a Present. How to Make a Denim Skirt Out of an Old Pair of Jeans. How to Make a Throw Pillow.

- **Instructions related to education.**

Ex: How to Make a Storyboard. How to Make a Bulletin Board. How to Make Classroom Materials Such as Play Dough, Clay, Finger Paints, Ink, and Paste. How to Make a Homemade Flashlight (a science project for elementary schoolkids). How to Create and Laminate Visual Aids. How to Create a Hyperstudio Program for Children. How to Make a Valentine’s Day Box.

- **Instructions on an environmental project.**

Ex: How to Prevent Erosion on a River Bank. How to Trim Trees. How to Create and Maintain a Compost Pile. How to Plant a Tree. How to Create an Organic Garden.

- **Instructions related to other cultures.**

Ex: How to Perform the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

- **Fun Instructions (often these are related to your major, your future career, or your work).**

Ex: How to Make a Cruella de Vil Halloween Costume. (This is a good topic for someone majoring in fashion design.) How to Carve a Jack-o’-Lantern. How to Make a Potato Gun. How to Wash a Dog. How to Clean a Civil War Musket. How to Prepare for a Romantic Date at Home. How to Train Your Dog. How to Throw Pottery. How to Write in Code. How to Set up

the Starting Blocks and Run a Sprint Successfully. How to Change a Bicycle Tire. How to Make a Tank Top. How to Make a Pinata. How to Tie-Dye. How to Fish.

Notes About Instructions

- Choose a topic for which you can create original visual aids. If you choose a topic for which you plan to surf the WWW to get your visual aids, your topic is NOT suitable for this assignment. For example, don't write about How to Replace a Toilet unless your toilet needs to be replaced and you can take photographs during the procedure.
- Make sure that the introduction and the steps are written for the same audience. If you are writing a set of instructions for older students to perform, make sure that the introduction (and not just the steps) are written with the students as the audience. (You may add a "Note to Teachers" section to a Set of Instructions written for students if you wish.) Of course, if you are writing about an arts and craft project that very young, non-reading students will do, your Set of Instructions will be written for the teacher and will tell the teacher what to do to use the arts and craft project in the classroom.
- When you write a Set of Instructions, you are writing about a procedure that has actions that must be performed in a specific order. If you find that you are writing "steps" that have no action, then you are writing notes, not steps. If you find that the "steps" you are writing can be done in any order or may not have to be done at all, then you are writing guidelines, not steps. Write your Instructions on a procedure that has at least 24 actions that must be followed sequentially (do one step, then do another) in a certain order.
- Do not write about a procedure in which lots of people do actions all at the same time. For example, do not write about how to perform a play in football.
- Note that your Instructions may contain a few hints or guidelines in addition to the 24 or more steps. For example, the introduction may contain a few hints or guidelines before step 1. The hints or guidelines may appear in a bulleted list as part of the introduction. Don't use numbers because hints or guidelines need not be followed in a particular order.
- A procedure such as "How to Clean the Kitchen at the Pub" will make a good Set of Instructions. Perhaps it really doesn't matter if the trash is taken out after the floor is mopped (on the other hand, if the trash bag breaks, the reader may have to mop twice), but put the actions in a specific order that you know from experience is efficient, and tell the reader that if he or she performs the steps in order then the procedure will be completed efficiently.

Class 2: The Set of Instructions Project: Writing Steps and Warnings

A Reminder

Choose a topic for which you can create original visual aids. If you choose a topic for which you plan to surf the WWW to get your visual aids, your topic is NOT suitable for this assignment. For example, don't write about How to Replace a Toilet unless your toilet needs to be replaced and you can take photographs during the procedure.

How Do I Write Instructions?

How Can I Motivate My Target Audience to Read My Set of Instructions?

You need to persuade your target audience to read your Instructions and to follow the steps carefully. You can persuade your target audience to read your Instructions by pointing out how they will benefit if they learn the procedure that your Set of Instructions is for. You can persuade your target audience to follow the steps carefully by pointing out that they will save time by reading and then performing each step instead of trying to figure out on their own how to do the procedure. You can also persuade your target audience to read your Instructions by making them attractive and by using white space in between steps.

Another way of motivating your target audience to read your Set of Instructions to make sure that they are accurate. You can get a performance test of your set of Instructions by asking someone to follow your Instructions as you watch. This will help you to determine if you left any steps out and will help you to find ways to improve your Instructions. It is very easy to leave out an important step.

Proofreading is also important when persuading your target audience to read your Set of Instructions. If it is not well proofread, your target audience may think that you don't know what you're writing about.

Conventional Organization for Instructions

Introduction—includes relevant items from the following list:

- **Subject:** the topic of the Instructions
- **Aim:** the purpose of the Instructions; the outcome of the procedure
- **Intended Readers:** the target audience of the Instructions
- **Scope:** what the Instructions cover and what the Instructions don't cover
- **Organization:** what comes first, second, third, etc.
- **Usage:** how to best use the Instructions
- **Conventions:** special features of the Instructions (e.g., you may point out that underlined terms are defined in a glossary at the end of the Instructions). Note: If only a few terms need to be defined, you may define them in the introduction, or in notes to the steps where those terms are used.

- **Motivation:** why the reader should read the Instructions (e.g., you may point out the benefits of knowing how to perform the procedure, or you may point out that the reader can save time by reading the Instructions instead of trying to figure things out on his or her own)
- **Safety:** what the reader must do in order to be safe while performing the Instructions
- **Legal Information:** what you need to write to keep from being sued (e.g., if you are writing about exercises, you need to point out that the reader should see a physician before beginning this or any other exercise program)
- **Table of Contents:** If your Instructions are long and cover a few different topics, you may want to add a Table of Contents to your Introduction. (Note: In long Instruction Manuals using the book format, the Table of Contents will appear BEFORE the Introduction, and the Introduction will be listed in the Table of Contents.)

Description of the Equipment

This may or may not include (or be) a visual aid.

List of Materials and Equipment

This list can be a big help to the readers. By using the list, the readers can make sure that they have all the materials and equipment they need before starting the procedure. That way, they don't have to stop in the middle of the Instructions and make a trip to the hardware store.

You can help the reader by classifying the list of materials and equipment. For example, the items needed for a home-improvement project can be classified into a List of Tools and a List of Materials.

Directions

Directions are the steps of the Instructions.

Troubleshooting

If you know that the readers may make certain common mistakes, you may want to include a troubleshooting guide at the end of your Instructions that tells the readers how to correct those mistakes. (Alternatively or additionally, if you know that the readers are likely to make a certain mistake at step 15, you should add a note to step 15 warning the reader not to make that mistake and telling the reader how to correct the mistake if the reader makes it.)

Important Advice for Writing Any Communication, Including Instructions: Identify your target audience and the knowledge its members already have.

Your target audience is the group of people you are writing your Instructions for. They do not already know how to do the procedure. If they did, they would not have to read your Instructions. However, they may already have some specialized knowledge. For example, if you are writing a tutorial for a computer program, you may identify your target audience as people who have some experience using computers but no experience using the particular program you are writing about. Therefore, you won't have to define terms such as "mouse" and "monitor," but you will have to write in detail about the particular program you are teaching the target audience to use.

How Do I Write Steps?

1. Give only one thing to do per step.

Don't have more than one thing to do per step. The reader will read the step and then turn away from the Set of Instructions and perform the step.

If you need to add explanatory material, add it after the action the reader will perform

Example: 4. Press the RETURN key. The POS Screen will appear.

2. Don't overwhelm your readers with information.

You may add some explanatory information to a step, but keep it brief.

3. Use imperative verbs.

Example: Turn the computer on.

When writing your steps, don't use the word "next." The step number will tell the reader that this is the action to perform next.

Incorrect: 5. Next, press <Enter>.

Correct: 5. Press <Enter>.

4. Emphasize important words.

Example: Drag down the **Edit** menu and select **Check Spelling**.

Example: Drag down the <Edit> menu and select <Check Spelling>.

Example: Drag down the "Edit" menu and select "Check Spelling."

Note: The American style of punctuation is to put commas and periods inside quotation marks.

You can refer to computer keys in various ways:

5. Press **ENTER**.

5. Press <Enter>.

5. Press "Enter."

Note: The American style of punctuation is to put commas and periods inside quotation marks.

5. Number the steps.

This will help your readers locate the next step quickly.

6. Use white space between steps.

The white space will make the Set of Instructions more attractive and less forbidding than a page that is filled with words. Making the Set of Instructions attractive and not forbidding is a technique that will help persuade the reader to read your Instructions.

7. When relevant, divide your Set of Instructions into sections and use a heading for each section.

Example of Headings:

Opening Cricket Graph
 Entering and Formatting Data
 Creating the Graph
 Saving the Graph
 Printing the Graph
 Closing Cricket Graph

8. When relevant, use branching steps.

Example: 6. Check the reading on the gauge.

- If it is high, follow the procedure described on page 8.
- If it is low, follow the procedure described on page 9.
- If it is normal, proceed to step 7.

9. Tell the reader how to correct a mistake.

Example: 5. Check the result. If it is incorrect, repeat steps 6-8.

10. When relevant, use a visual aid in a step.

Use as many visual aids as the readers need. Some Sets of Instructions will need only one visual aid, while other Sets of Instructions may have a visual aid for each step. Remember that this assignment requires you to have at least one original aid.

11. As much as possible, keep the step and its visual aid and/or note(s) on the same page.

Make the visual aids easy to find. Keep each visual aid on the same page as the step it goes with. This also applies to steps and their associated notes. It is a good idea to do this even though it may leave a lot of white space at the bottom of a page because you have moved a step to the top of the next page. If you are worried about having too much white space at the bottom of a page, you can always write, "Note: Continued on next page."

On rare occasions, it may be impossible to keep the visual aid on the same page as the step. For example, you may have a visual aid that takes up an entire page and that the reader must often refer to. In that case, you would make the visual aid an Appendix, and you would let the reader know where the visual aid is located. For example: “See Figure 4 in the Appendix” or “See Figure 4 on page 6.” Usually, however, you can keep the visual aid and its step on the same page.

12. If necessary, add notes and/or warn your readers.

A note is almost always placed after the step it is for.

If necessary, you can place a note before a step or steps, but indicate which step or steps the note is for.

Note: Steps 1 through 4 can be done a few days before the big night.

1. Prepare an emergency contact list.

A warning is often placed after the step it is for.

If necessary, you can place a warning before a step or steps, but indicate which step or steps the warning is for.

WARNING: Be sure to wear safety glasses for steps 13-17. Safety glasses will protect your eyes from the flying fragments of hot metal. Not wearing safety glasses may result in blindness.

13. Light the welding torch.

In addition, you can make putting on safety glasses a step in itself that is followed by a warning.

12. Put on your safety glasses.

WARNING: Be sure to wear safety glasses for steps 13-17. Safety glasses will protect your eyes from the flying fragments of hot metal. Not wearing safety glasses may result in blindness.

13. Light the welding torch.

How Do I Warn My Readers?

1. Emphasize your warnings.

For example, you may print warnings in red ink or print them in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

2. Make sure that your readers will read the warnings before performing the dangerous action.

You don't want the reader to perform a step, then read that the step was dangerous to perform.

3. Tell your readers how they or the materials and equipment they are using can be hurt if they do not take precautions.

People are more likely to wear safety glasses if they know that THEY MAY BECOME BLIND if they don't wear them.

4. Tell your readers how to protect themselves.

WARNING: Safety glasses will protect your eyes from flying fragments of hot metal. Not wearing safety glasses may result in blindness.

5. Make the protective action a step.

For example, when relevant, you will tell your readers to wear safety glasses. You can make this a step in itself. Include a warning stating the possible consequences of not wearing safety glasses.

Example: 5. Put on your safety glasses. WARNING: Safety glasses will protect your eyes from flying fragments of hot metal. Not wearing safety glasses may result in blindness.

Note: The following four pages contain the first two pages of two sets of Instructions.

A Tutorial for Cricket Graph 1.3

By Mark Johnson

Introduction

This tutorial will show you how to make a column graph using the Macintosh computer program Cricket Graph 1.3. This tutorial assumes that you are familiar with such computer terms as clicking and dragging. This tutorial will show you how to create a bar graph showing how many men and women in the United States died from AIDS during 1984-1986.

Opening Cricket Graph

1. Turn on the computer.
2. Locate the Cricket Graph icon. See Figure 1.



Figure 1: Cricket Graph Icon

3. Double-click the Cricket Graph icon to open the program.

Note: You will know you have opened the Cricket Graph program when you see the window for entering data. See Figure 2. Note: Figure 2 shows only the top of the Untitled Data #1 window.

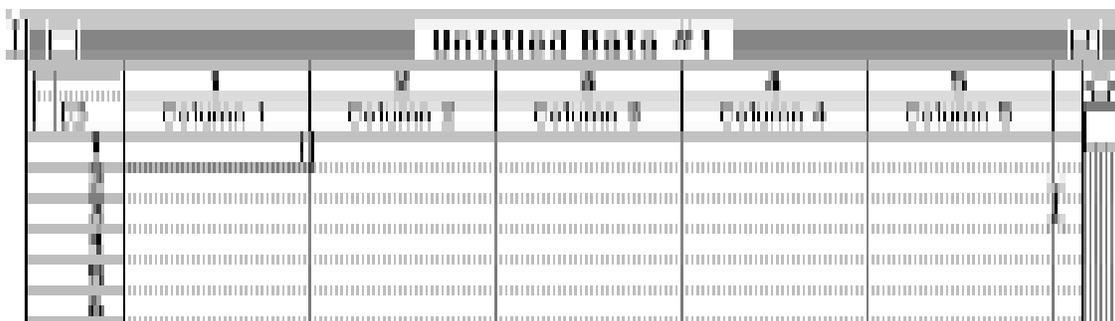


Figure 2: What the screen should look like after step 3.

Note: Continued on next page.

Entering and Formatting Data

- Use the mouse and keyboard to enter the data you see in Figure 3. Note: Don't type the period and three zeros. Also, don't worry when the program adds them automatically. This data will show the number of AIDS deaths, by sex, in three consecutive years. Enter the years in column 1, enter the number of male deaths in column 2, and the number of female deaths in column 3. (This data comes from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* for 1992.)

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
1	1991	2000	2000		
2	1992	2000	4000		
3	1993	10000	2000		
4					

Figure 3: What the screen should look like after step 4.

- Add column labels to show which numbers refer to men and which to women. To do so:
 - Click the box labeled Column 2. This will highlight the term **Column 2**.
 - Type the term **Men**.
 - Click the box labeled Column 3. This will highlight the term **Column 3**.
 - Type the term **Women**.

The finished result will look like Figure 4.

	Column 1	Men	Women	Column 4	Column 5
1	1991	2000	2000		
2	1992	2000	4000		
3	1993	10000	2000		
4					

Figure 4: What the screen should look like after step 5.

[Note by David Bruce: This Set of Instructions continued for several more pages and contained many more screen shots.]

[Note by David Bruce: This Set of Instructions has a period at the end of each step.]

How to Prepare for a Babysitter

By Chelsea Fredrickson

Introduction

Leaving your children for the first time can be very scary for parents. However, sooner or later, the time will come that all parents have to leave their children. Being completely prepared for the babysitter can hopefully relieve some of the anxiety for the parents, so they can enjoy their night out. Being well prepared not only relieves anxiety for the parents, but also for the babysitter as well. Babysitters want to avoid taking their eyes off the children as much as possible to ensure the children's safety. This also gives them more one-on-one playtime with the children. The following directions can be modified for the ages of the children. Certain steps may be omitted based on the age of the children. If children have any special needs, make sure to modify Instructions to include them.

Materials

Medical and Emergency Supplies

- Medications
- Antiseptic Spray
- Gauze
- Medical Tape
- Band-Aids
- Fire Extinguisher

Food

- Frozen Dinner
- Favorite Bedtime Snack

Child Supplies

- Pajamas
- Diapers/Diaper Wipes
- Child-Proof Gates
- Child-Proof Cabinet Safety Locks

Entertainment

- Audiocassette/CD and Player
- Favorite Movie
- Games/Toys

Other

- Cash
- Phone Book
- Pen
- Paper
- Note Pad
- Plastic Container
- Scissors

Note: Steps 1 through 4 can be done a few days before the big night.

1. Prepare an emergency contact list.

Make sure to include ...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 911 • Fire Department • Doctors • Neighbors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Department • Poison Control • Dentist • Relatives |
|--|---|

Notes: It is necessary to list only relatives who live in close proximity.
The list can be laminated for future use.

2. Prepare a first-aid kit.

In the plastic container place ...

- Band-aids
- Antiseptic Spray
- Medical Tape
- Scissors
- Gauze

3. Prepare a bedtime snack.

Preparing your child's favorite snack helps the bedtime process move along more smoothly.

Note: Steps 4 and 5 may be omitted if you choose to feed your children before the babysitter arrives.

4. Prepare or buy a dinner that can be easily baked in the oven.

That way, the babysitter does not have to spend too much time away from the children preparing a dinner.

Note: Steps 5 through 11 can all be placed on the same piece of paper. If necessary, more pages can be used.

5. Write down the cooking time and temperature for dinner.

Include any extra directions needed.

Tip: Start heating up dinner before the babysitter gets there, so all the sitter has to do is take it out of the oven.

6. Write down all the medications the children are on.

Make sure to include which child, how much, and when the medication should be given.

Tip: Color coding the medication helps avoid confusion. Place a colored sticker on the medicine bottle with the child's name on it. Write the directions in the same color pen or marker. Avoid blue or black colors.

7. Write down any allergies the children have.

If any children have food allergies, avoid having that food in the house, or make sure it is in a child-proof cabinet.

[Note by David Bruce: This Set of Instructions continued for two more pages and contained a diagram showing emergency materials laid out on a kitchen counter.]

[Note by David Bruce: This Set of Instructions has a period at the end of each step.]

Class 3: The Set of Instructions Project: Assign On-the-Job-Writing Report; Visual Aids

Homework Due Today: Hand in a typed 1-page memo telling me briefly about the topic and audience of your Instructions. Tell me briefly about the visual aids you plan to use in your Instructions. (Will they be photographs, screen shots, drawings, etc.? Don't use the word "picture" because a "picture" can be many things.) Proofread carefully.

Note: The word "pictures" is vague, as pictures can be photographs, drawings, screen shots, diagrams, etc. If you will use photographs, write that you will use photographs.

Note: In the phrase "visual aid," the word "aid" does not have an *e*. An "aide" is a human helper—for example, a nurse's aide or the general's aide. For example:

General George Washington was once traveling in a carriage on a narrow street where he overtook a farmer with a load of hay. The farmer was traveling very slowly, so the General's **aides** told the farmer that he was holding up General Washington and that he would have to move off the side of the road and let the General pass. The farmer disliked the tone of voice the **aides** were using, so he told them that he had as much right to the use of the road as General Washington had. When the **aides** reported to General Washington what the farmer had said, he replied, "So he has."

Note: "The phrases "there is," "there was," and "there were" are often wordy.

Wordy: There are three main topics that I will write about: 1) ...

Not wordy: I will write about three main topics: 1) ...

Sample Homework Memo:

To: David Bruce
From: Joe Goodstudent (MW 12-2; ENG 308J)
Date: 2/20/10
Re: Set of Instructions Memo

For the Set of Instructions assignment, I plan to provide a detailed step-by-step instruction list for how to use data encryption in order to send private data via e-mail. My major here at Ohio University is Information and Telecommunication Systems, and I am currently taking a Data Encryption course. Our class has gone through several labs of proper techniques to encrypt and decrypt private data, and I feel I am knowledgeable enough on the subject to teach others about the process. I feel this subject of sending private data via e-mail is interesting and important for people who need to have security measures.

The audience of the Set of Instructions will be students or faculty members who have a need to protect their e-mail data for private use. An example of the need of use would be a student who

needs to send his/her bank account username and password to his/her parents for financial help. Another example would be for a teacher to send a particular student his/her grade report that neither would want to be intercepted and read by another user.

The process of the data encryption requires the installation of several applications such as GPG software, GPA (Gnu Privacy Assistant), and Thunderbird Open Source E-mail Package. The two users who require private and secure data transmission need to create password keys that they will give to one another. Once each user has the other's key, they can then write their e-mail documents, choose the e-mail to then be encrypted using Thunderbird E-mail, sign the document with their private keys they created, and then decrypt the transmitted message to confidentially read the document.

The process sounds more complicated than it actually is, and once the process is set up, the transmission of secure and private e-mail documents is rather easy. I plan to use step-by-step screen shots to use as visual aids. I will capture screen shots of where to download each application on their websites, the options to choose on the applications, how to create user keys, and which options to select for the encryption and decryption of the e-mail documents.

Short Memo Assignment: Interview About On-the-Job Writing

Interview a person who does the kind of writing that you will do later on the job. For example, if you plan to teach English to high school students, interview a high school English teacher. If you plan to work in a chemistry laboratory, interview a chemist who works in a laboratory. If you plan to sell farm machinery, interview a person who sells farm machinery. Ask the person these questions:

1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?
2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?
3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?
4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?
5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?

Be sure to ask these questions, but feel free to think of additional questions to ask; for example, if the person you are interviewing does a lot of writing each week, you may want to ask this question: How do you handle all the writing in a week so you don't feel overwhelmed? Or you could ask: What is unique about writing for your job? Here are some other possible questions:

- Optional: What is an example of something that you have written recently that has resulted in effective action?

- Optional: What kinds of papers should I have in my writing portfolio to show prospective employers? For example, if I have a Set of Instructions in my portfolio, what would be some good topics for that Set of Instructions?
- Optional: How can I improve my writing?
- Optional: Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?
- Optional: What are the top three skills needed to be successful in this career?
- Optional: What are some typical mistakes in communication made by people who are new to the job?
- Optional: Do you have any job-hunting tips for me?

Write a short memo in which you report on the results of your interview. Use the memo format, and direct the memo to your teacher. In the introduction, tell your teacher whom you interviewed and why. In the body of the memo, list the questions you asked and summarize the answers you received. Put the questions in bold so that they stand out. The memo will be due in Class 5.

Dashes and Hyphens

Interview question number 4 above uses dashes. Please be aware that dashes and hyphens are different. A hyphen is shorter.

Dash — Hyphen -

To make a dash on a Macintosh, simultaneously press these keys: shift—option—hyphen.

If you can't figure out how to make a dash on your computer, use the Help menu. If that doesn't work, use two hyphens to represent a dash.

Dash --

How Do I Interview People?

Often the best way to gather information you need for an on-the-job communication is to talk with someone who has special knowledge of the topic or situation you are writing about. A university will have many experts.

Advice for Interviews

Before the Interview

1. Select a person to interview who will be informative.

2. Write your questions ahead of time.

- Do this before you set up the interview because if you telephone the interviewee, he or she may want to do the interview over the telephone right then.
- See the Interview Report Assignment in this section for some good questions to ask at the interview. Of course, you may ask additional questions of your own choosing.

3. Arrange the interview.

- If possible, interview the interviewee face to face. You can also arrange a time for an interview over the telephone or interview someone by using e-mail. Interviewing someone by e-mail has a disadvantage in that the interviewee will be doing much of the writing for you. To learn to write well, you yourself must write.
- Before going to the interview, review your questions to make sure that will get you the information you need. (It's always a good idea to brainstorm questions more than once.)

During the Interview

1. Let the interviewee do most of the talking.

This is important. You are there to learn from the interviewee.

2. Even if you are recording the interview, take notes.

I once interviewed Athens, Ohio, Municipal Court Judge Douglas Bennett for *The Athens NEWS*. Because I had a tape recorder, I didn't take any notes. Unfortunately, when I got home and tried to write the article, I discovered that the batteries in my tape recorder were weak and so all I heard as I played back the tape was a low hum. I had to call Judge Bennett and reschedule the interview.

After the Interview

1. Thank the interviewee for his or her time.

Do this in person or on the telephone, if either of these is how you are interviewing the interviewee. This shows that you understand good etiquette.

2. Write a short thank-you note or e-mail in addition to thanking the interviewee verbally.

Of course, if you are interviewing the interviewee by e-mail, you will probably not be able to take the interviewee verbally.

Note: For a sample interview report, see the following pages.

To: David Bruce
From: Jessie Fannin (ENG 308J, 11-12)
Date: October 9, 2007
Re: Interview for On-the-Job Writing

I interviewed my mother, Monika Fannin, about on-the-job writing. She is a Massage Therapist who specializes in Chronic Pain. Massage therapy is somewhat similar to physical therapy, in which I plan to make my career, so this information should be beneficial to me. I asked her these questions regarding on-the-job writing:

1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?

I spend about ten minutes per patient, and the number of patients varies from week to week. In special cases where a referral is made to a chiropractor or an insurance company, I will need to write a SOAP note, so that will lengthen the time spent writing for that specific patient.

2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?

I record clinical information on my patients before and after performing their massage. Before the massage, I record their complaints, current problems, special requests, or anything I pick up on during the clinical interview. After the massage, I add further notes as to what I found upon actual palpation of their musculature, as well as my treatment and any instructions I may have given to the patient.

These notes may have to be transposed into a SOAP note and submitted to insurance if requested (mostly Worker's Compensation claims), to a court of law if the patient is in litigation, or to a chiropractor or physician if the patient is referred on. A SOAP note consists of the following:

S - Subjective

Statements made by the patient about how he or she feels and the details of how any accident or injury may have occurred. This information should include the date of injury, place of injury, and if any popping, clicking, weakness or other sensation was felt.

O - Objective

Statements made by me stating how the patient looks including obvious deformity, swelling, bruising, palpable muscle tension, palpable scar tissue, palpable trigger points in the muscles, etc. If possible, the individual muscles involved should be named (i.e., palpable fibrous tissue was found overlying the rhomboid muscles). I do also give an overall statement about how the massage proceeded and what I found upon palpation or massage of muscle groups. I go on from here to explain the various treatment massage techniques that were given to each area.

A - Assessment

Statements made by me after the massage of my findings about the condition of the patient (i.e., patient has rigid musculature of his neck after automobile accident).

P - Plan

Statements made here would include when the next massage was to be scheduled, any suggestions given to the patient such as icing, elevation, etc., as well as any comments the patient may have as they leave. This helps tell me for the next visit what strengthening, stretching or other things the patient may have been working on and how this has helped their problem.

3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?

It is extremely important. My patients return for continued treatment of a specific problem or perhaps multiple symptoms such as in the case of fibromyalgia. My writing should be extremely accurate so that correct payment for a specific problem may be paid or a physician or chiropractor may get a clear picture of what I saw when caring for the patient. Many times an insurance company simply wants to know if the patient had an increase in pain and palpable findings after an auto accident, or if when you saw him or her prior to the accident no symptoms were present in the area of question.

4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?

Absolutely. You may be a good practitioner of massage, but if you communicate poorly to your patient (i.e., talk too much, inappropriately, or not at all), then he or she may not return for additional massage therapy or report to the referring physician that you seemed uninformed or unprofessional. My raises and promotions are on the basis of customer and referring physician satisfaction and continued referral of new patients. If my written and oral communications are presented in a clear, concise, and professional manner, that is a direct reflection on my education, experience, and overall skill as a massage therapist. Many times, a patient will return not because they have continued pain, but because you listened to them. Listening is also a very important communication skill. Focusing entirely on the patient is extremely important. I see a patient for over an hour, so I see them longer than any other medical practitioner in their life. I must be very careful also to obey all Ethical Codes and Practices.

5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?

Focus on detailing your communication in a way that cannot be easily misunderstood. Don't generalize; be specific. Name the muscle or muscles you are referring to, not just "upper arm." Use good sentence structure and perfect spelling. Be professional and to the point.

6. Which mistakes in other people's writing really bother you at work?

I do not deal much with the writings of other people in my current line of work. However, in my past while working at a hospital, my biggest gripe was with run-on sentences, the misuse of commas, and spelling mistakes.

How Do I Create Visual Aids for Instructions?

Advice for Creating Visual Aids

1. Look for places where visual aids will help your readers.

Actively go through your steps looking for places where a visual aid will help the readers. For example, where would visual aids be very useful in the following Instructions?

Dumbbell Curl

1. With the dumbbells in each hand, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold the dumbbells with your palms facing forward.
3. Bring one dumbbell up to your chest while bending the elbow and keeping the part of your arm from the shoulder to the elbow stationary.
4. Lower the dumbbell back to the starting position described in step 2.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 for the other arm.

Note: Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

2. Choose the kinds of visual aids that will help the readers.

Use the right kind of visual aid:

- When photographs are appropriate, use photographs.
- When a screen shot is appropriate (as in showing what the computer screen should look like after a step), use a screen shot.
- If another kind of visual aid is appropriate, use it.

3. Avoid distracting detail in your visual aids.

Keep the background uncluttered. You want the readers to look at what is in the foreground, not at what is in the background. You may want to take photographs with a blank wall in the background.

4. Make sure the readers can see everything that they are supposed to see.

Sometimes, a dark photograph will have a dark line drawn on it to point out a part, but it is impossible or difficult to see the dark line.

If you are writing about preparing a table in a banquet room and you take a photograph of a white plate on a white tablecloth, the white plate may not show up. Use a contrasting color for either the plate or the tablecloth. In addition, when you take a photograph of the needed materials

and equipment, make sure each item will show up clearly in the photograph. You may need to put a tablecloth of a contrasting color on the table before setting the materials and equipment on it.

Sometimes, foreign films will show white subtitles against a white background. This makes it impossible to read the words of the subtitles.

5. When they are desirable, write informative titles.

For example: “Figure 1: List of Materials.”

6. Make sure that your visual aids and your text work together.

- Introduce your visual aids in your prose. For example: “See Figure 1.”
- Make your visual aids easy to find. Keep each visual aid on the same page as the step it goes with. To do this, you may find yourself moving a step from the bottom of one page to the top of the next page. After you move a step to the top of the next page, you may end up with lots of white space at the bottom of the first page. In that case, add a note. For example: “Note: Continued on next page.”
- On rare occasions, it may be impossible to keep the visual aid on the same page as the step. For example, you may have a visual aid that takes up an entire page and that the reader must often refer to. In that case, you would make the visual aid an Appendix, and you would let the reader know where the visual aid is located. For example: “See Figure 4 in the Appendix” or “See Figure 4 on page 6.”

7. In general, use color for emphasis, not for aesthetics.

- Sparing use of color for aesthetic purposes is OK, but look especially for places where color will help the readers. For example, putting the word “WARNING” in red (and all capital letters) helps the readers by emphasizing the warning. Occasionally, you may want the readers to look especially at one part of a visual aid, so you can put that part in color and leave the rest of the visual aid in black and white. For example: In an Employee Manual, you wish to show where employees are allowed to park. You may wish to create a diagram of the parking lot with the employee parking spaces highlighted in color. (Note: Employee Manuals are Policies and Procedures Manuals. They tell the employees about such policies as where to park and about such procedures as how to clock in and out.) Another example: Color in TV commercials is often used wisely. Sometimes, only the product is shown in color; everything else is in black and white.
- Use fewer colors rather than more colors. Too many colors can be distracting.
- Sometimes attractiveness is important. If you are writing for children, you may wish to use color for decorative as well as for communicative purposes.

9. Keep it simple. Beware of bells and whistles.

Sometimes, people make graphs much fancier than they should be because they have a graphing computer program that has a lot of bells and whistles. Think about what the readers need. If they need a simple line graph, not a complex 3-D graph, give them the simple line graph.

Questions about Visual Aids:

1. What kind of visual aid would you use to:

- Show the various positions of an exercise?
- Show what an audiometer looks like?
- Show how to apply make-up?
- Show how to use a computer program?
- Show what an erg (rowing machine) looks like?
- Show how to fill out a form?

2. If you use photographs, what should be in the background?

Nothing distracting. (Occasionally, a student will use photographs taken at home to illustrate the steps of a procedure done at home. Guess what I see in the background.)

Visual Aids Exercise: Assume that you are going to write your Instructions on how to stretch correctly and safely.

- Where would people stretch? Would the location vary according to the purpose for stretching?
- What kind of visual aids would you use?
- Where is a good location to create the visual aids?
- What should be in the background?

Advice for Visual Aids for Your Instructions

- You must create your own visual aids for your Set of Instructions. You can't use visual aids you cut or copy out of a book or magazine or other source.
- If you plan to use photographs, it's a good idea to write the steps for your Instructions first, then figure out where you need photographs. If you take the photographs first, then write the steps, you may discover that you need to take more photographs.
- Remember that your Instructions consist of both the written steps and the visual aids. If you test a draft without visual aids, you are testing only part of your Instructions and you may receive a lower grade.

- Get rid of distracting details. If you are writing about giving yourself a manicure, have the model in the photographs take off her rings before you take the photographs.
- To cover up a distracting background, you may need to have a few friends hold up an ironed sheet in back of what you are photographing. (The sheet should be ironed to avoid distracting wrinkles.)
- To get labels in your photograph of Materials and Equipment, you may use a program such as Photoshop. Or you may print the labels, place them on or by each material or piece of equipment, then take the photograph.
- Check the color of the arrows in your visual aids. Sometimes, the arrows are hard to see if they are a dark color against a dark background. They will sometimes be much more visible if you make them yellow.
- Keep on the same page the List of Materials and the visual aid showing the materials.
- Take your photographs early. You need time to take additional photographs if they turn out blurry.
- Be aware that in some cases it may take time to get permission to take the photographs—for example, when the photographs need to be taken inside a restaurant or store or other public place.
- To save money, you may want to print early drafts in black and white. The final draft should be printed in color.
- If you need to crop (trim) the edges of any photographs, do so using a paper cutter so that the photograph has straight edges. Of course, you may also do this using a graphics program such as Adobe Photoshop.
- If you are scanning photographs and placing them in your Instructions, be careful not to squash the photographs. Make sure that the people and items in the photographs look normal, not squashed.

Exercise

Fill in the Worksheet on the following pages to help you plan your Set of Instructions.

Worksheet: Setting Goals, Analyzing Audience, and Thinking Ethically

Topic, Purpose, and Final Result

What are you writing? What is the communication's topic?

Why are you writing the communication (other than it's a course requirement)? What is the communication's purpose?

What outcome (final result) do you desire? After the target audience reads the communication, what do you want to happen?

Target Audience and Other Readers

Who are your primary readers? Who is your target audience?

What is your readers' relationship to you? Do your readers know you?

What are your readers' job titles and responsibilities? Are your readers decision makers, advisors, or implementers?

Who else might read your communication? Sometimes, people who are not in your target audience will read what you wrote.

How familiar are your readers with your subject? Do you need to provide any background information?

How familiar are your readers with your specialty—knowledge you learned in your major? Will your readers be familiar with the words and concepts you use?

What is your readers' attitude toward your subject? Why? What do you want it to be?

What is your readers' attitude toward you? Why? What do you want it to be?

What events and circumstances influence the way you should write? For example, knowing that the reader has just written a large check to the IRS may make it difficult to persuade the reader to spend money.

How will your readers use the information you provide? For example, if you are writing a Set of Instructions, you will want to use numbered steps and you will want to be sure that your Set of Instructions can lie flat (don't use a binding that forces the reader to close the Sets of Instructions when not actually reading them) because readers will read a step, then perform the step, and then find and read the next step.

Readers' Questions

What are the important questions your readers will want you to answer in the communication?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Stakeholders: Identify all the stakeholders.

Who, besides your readers and yourself, are the stakeholders in your communication? (Stakeholders are people who will be affected by your communication.) In the next section, you will answer this question: How will the stakeholders be affected by your communication?

Ethics: Determine if your communication is ethical.

Is this communication ethical?

- Would you want done to you what you are thinking of doing to other people?

- What are the consequences of the action you are thinking about doing? (Be sure to consider the consequences for all the stakeholders.)

- Are there any other ethical considerations that you should take into account? (For example, effect on the environment? Effect on future generations? Does the action you are considering doing involve breaking any ethical rules that are important to you? Are your persuasive strategies ethical?)

Legality: Determine whether your communication is legal.

For example, if you are making a recommendation, is the recommended action legal?

Strategies for Achieving Your Goals

What are some strategies you can use to make your communication persuasive? What arguments will you use? What persuasive points will you make? (For example, telling the benefits for the readers is persuasive.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What are some strategies you can use to make sure your communication gives the readers the information they need? (For example, you will provide answers for all the readers' important questions that you listed earlier, but are there any other questions you should answer?) What informative points do you need to make? How can you make it easy for the readers to use the information you provide? (For example, using headings makes it easy to find information.) Make notes about anything else you have learned from filling out this worksheet. (For example, how long should the communication be? Should the tone be formal or informal?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Class 4: The Set of Instructions Project: Page and Document Design; Type Selection

How Do I Design Pages and Documents?

1. Keep related content—such a step and its visual aid, or a step and its note, or a step and its warning—together.

A good page design can help the reader quickly find the visual aid that goes with a certain step. To make the visual aids easy to find, keep the visual aid next to or under the step it illustrates. That way, the reader doesn't have to flip the page to look at the visual aid after reading the step.

2. Make your Set of Instructions easy to use.

A good visual design can help the reader to quickly find the remedy for a problem described in a Troubleshooting Guide. Many Troubleshooting Guides are in a table format. The Problem is described in the first column, and the Possible Solutions are described in a second column.

3. Emphasize warnings and other important content.

A good visual design can emphasize an important warning. Make your warnings stand out. You don't want the reader to do a step, then read the warning that goes with the step.

4. Make the communication attractive to encourage readers to use it.

- A Set of Instructions that does not have white space between steps can look difficult to readers.
- Many newspapers try to avoid having too much grey on their pages.

Questions:

- If you are writing first aid Instructions for a backpacker, how big and heavy should the Instructions be?
- If your Instructions will be used in an area where water and oil are present, what should you do to protect your Instructions?
- If your Instructions will be used in a dimly lit area, what should you do to improve the readability of your Instructions?
- If your Instructions will be read by children, what can you do to make your Instructions more readable by and more attractive to children?
- If your Instructions will be read by the elderly, what can you do to make your Instructions more readable by the elderly?

- If your Instructions are long enough to be bound, which kind of binding will be more helpful to the readers: a binding that will allow the Instructions to lie flat or a binding that will not?

How Do I Select Easy-to-Read Type?

1. Avoid **odd-looking fonts** unless you have a good reason for using them.

One of my students who wrote a Set of Instructions about How to Temporarily Straighten Curly Hair cleverly used a curly-looking font for the word “Curly” in the title.

- Which font—serif or sans serif—can be used effectively in headlines?

Serifs are little lines at the bottom of some letters: T, I, M.
A sans serif font does not have those lines.

Both—the most important point is that the font be readable.

- Which typeface can be used effectively in body text?

Serif fonts are easier to read in long passages than sans serif fonts.

“When people read something in a difficult-to-read font, they unwittingly transfer that sense of difficulty onto the topic they’re reading about. [Norbert] Schwarz and his former student Hyunjin Song have found that when people read about an exercise regimen or a recipe in a less legible font, they tend to rate the exercise regimen more difficult and the recipe more complicated than if they read about them in a clearer font.”

Source: Drake Bennett, “Easy = True.” *Boston Globe*. 31 January 2010

<http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/01/31/easy__true/?page=full>.

2. AVOID USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS UNLESS YOU HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR USING THEM.

The use of all capital letters is OK for WARNINGS. However, reading a page of all capital letters can be wearisome.

3. Keep it simple.

Don’t use a lot of fonts and typefaces.

As an experiment, sit down at your computer and write a short letter using many different kinds of *typefaces* and *styles* and **fonts** and **different sizes**. Make every word in your short letter different (in typeface, style, font, and size) from every other word. I think that you will find that your letter looks horrible.

Reminder: Your On-the-Job-Writing Interview Report is Due Next Class

Here is an example of the kind of memo that you will turn in.

To: David Bruce
From: Emily House (9-11 a.m. MW; ENG 308J)
Date: 10/11/09
Re: Interview About On-the-Job Writing

Because I am pre-med, I interviewed Dr. Craig Martin, a family friend and a physician. I shadowed him over the summer and got to observe the writing he does on a daily basis.

1. How much time per week do you spend writing on the job?

I write all the time. When I'm in the office, it is in the form of dictation. In the hospital, it is written by hand. I write at least 3 hours a day, so 15 hours a week.

2. What kinds of writing do you do on the job?

Almost everything is clinical; for my notes I record the subjective complaints of my patients and then I document my observations. Then, I have to make my conclusions in the form of an assessment, and lay out my plan of action. Occasionally I have to write letters, and I fill out a lot of forms. A LOT of forms.

3. How important is it to be able to write well in your job?

It is very important to be clear and CONCISE. It does not have to be pretty or elegant. It really needs to be efficient—the most information in the fewest words. My billing and patient safety demand accuracy. There is an annoying catch phrase that is unfortunately true: “If it wasn't documented, it didn't happen.”

4. Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions?

In my line of work, one can't get promoted. It's weird; as soon as one gets out of the residency, they are in the same position that they will be in the rest of their career. I guess some people will change jobs, like go from being a doctor to being an administrator. Some go to the Dark Side and work for insurance companies. The typical physician may have to buy into a practice or partnership, but it's not really a promotion. Since doctors can't read each other's handwriting, the writing bit apparently does not matter. (Ha Ha!)

Good patient care demands good communication in all forms.

Some docs are poor communicators but have a lot of technical skill. The patients would be best off if that same doctor was a good communicator. It eases a lot of anxiety for them. I think many malpractice cases could be avoided if communication was better, as well.

David Bruce

-2-

October 11, 2009

5. What advice would you give a person who is currently taking a course that is intended to prepare him or her to write well?

Learn to be a FAST typist. Be concise. Be organized. These things will be useful for any profession. So much of medicine is built around structure and logical reasoning. If the documentation is jumbled up and disorganized, important details could be missed. Keeping things structured helps everyone involved in the case keep track of data and treatment plans. Think of it like this: A leads to B, B leads to C, and this brings about D and so on.

A patient has a concern (A), and I search out details in the history (B). THEN I look at the patient and document my exam findings (C). These lead to my assessment (D). Only after my assessment is made, can I make a rational plan for tests and treatment (E).

6. Which mistakes in other people's writing bother you?

Obvious, easily corrected typos really bother me.

Use a Comma or Commas to Set Off Parenthetical Elements

Set off parenthetical elements with commas.

She, however, is not afraid of them.

She, on the other hand, is not afraid of them.

We see, though, that she is small.

- Famous pianist Anton Rubinstein's musical sense was, **of course**, well developed. Whenever he didn't want to get out of bed, his wife knew that all she had to do was to go upstairs to the piano and play an unresolved chord. Mr. Rubinstein would jump out of bed, run upstairs to the piano, and play the finishing notes.

- Phyllis Diller found it easy to acquire experience as a comedian. She simply called the Red Cross and said, "I'm available for shows. Where do you want me?" There wasn't any pay, **of course**, but the experience was valuable.

- When Oprah Winfrey was 14 years old, she wandered the streets of Chicago, homeless, and she needed help. Aretha Franklin, **on the other hand**, was a highly successful singer. One day, a limousine pulled up to a hotel and Ms. Franklin got out. Young Oprah saw her, ran up to her, and began pouring out her story. Before they reached the door of the hotel, Ms. Franklin had placed \$100 into Oprah's hands.

Class 5: The Set of Instructions Project: Testing, Classification

On-the-Job-Writing Interview Report Due Today: Hand in your typed **Interview Report** (Interview about on-the-job writing).

- Be sure to ask the FIVE questions that I have required that you ask, but feel free to ask additional questions of your own.
- Your typed Interview Report should be no longer than 2 pages. If your Interview Report is two pages long, remember to put a header at the top of page two. Use this information: name of reader (your teacher), page number, and date. Be sure that the dates on page one and page two are the same.
- Address this memo to your teacher.
- Write a short introduction, then use a question-and-answer format to report on the results of your interview.
- In your introduction, say whom you interviewed and why you interviewed that person. You should interview someone who can tell you about the kinds of writing you will do later on the job. If you want to be an elementary schoolteacher, interview an elementary schoolteacher. If you want to be a lawyer, interview a lawyer. If you want to be a physical therapist, interview a physical therapist. Note: If you are majoring in magazine journalism, you should NOT interview a librarian; instead, you should interview a magazine journalist.
- Put the questions in **bold** to keep your communication from looking too grey.
- Remember that you can ask optional questions about such things as what would be a good topic for a Set of Instructions or which kinds of documents would look good in your writing portfolio.
- Either have no space before and after a dash, or have a space before and after a dash.
- This interview question uses dashes: Are communication skills—whether written or oral—important for people who want raises and promotions? Please be aware that dashes and hyphens are different. A hyphen is shorter.

Dash —

Hyphen -

Note: You may hand in this assignment late. Occasionally, students have difficulty getting interviews.

Note: See the previous class for an excellent example of an On-the-Job-Writing Interview report.

Define Words as Needed

Once a minister wanted a chandelier for his church, but although he asked for it frequently, his request was never acted on. He asked the church clerk about the problem, and she replied, “First, I can’t spell that word ‘chandelier,’ so I never put your request in the minutes. Second, none of our local musicians can play one of those things. Finally, what we really need around here are some new lights.”

How Do I Put Items into Categories?

When you classify items, you group them into categories. In your Set of Instructions, you may want to classify your list of tools, materials, and/or equipment, if you have one. (If few tools, materials, and/or equipment are needed, you may not need to classify those items.) What are some various ways in which a list of tools, materials, and equipment needed to perform a Set of Instructions could be classified?

1. You may classify items into groups of tools, materials, and/or equipment. You may simply have headings for Tools, Materials, and Equipment, and put your lists of tools, materials, and equipment under the relevant headings. For example, a student who wrote about installing an epoxy floor used the headings “Tools,” “Materials,” and “Machines” for his categories.

2. You may classify items according to what part of the Instructions the tools, materials, and/or equipment may be used. For example, a student wrote a Set of Instructions about how to clean a room at Holiday Inn. The Instructions were divided into three segments: 1) cleaning the hotel room, 2) making the bed, and 3) cleaning the bathroom. Therefore, the student classified the material into three categories: 1) materials needed for cleaning the hotel room, 2) materials needed for making the bed, and 3) materials needed for cleaning the bathroom.

3. You may classify items according to where the tools, materials, and/or equipment may be found or purchased. For example, you may have lists of the items that can be found at home, the items that can be purchased at any department store, and the items that must be purchased at a hobby shop.

4. You may classify items according to whether tools, materials, and/or equipment are mandatory or optional. Anything that is optional may be placed under the heading “Optional.”

Examples of Classification:

- A student classified her materials into a list of “Necessary Materials” and a list of “Troubleshooting Materials.”
- A student writing about how to create a spring-theme party for children classified her materials into “Materials Needed for Creating Decorations” and “Materials Needed for Creating Slime.”
- A student who wrote about refinishing wood furniture classified the necessary tools and materials into these categories: tools and materials needed for “Paint,” tools and materials needed for “Special Effects Paint,” and tools and materials needed for “Natural Finish Wood.”
- A student who wrote about being a server at a restaurant classified the materials into two categories: “Materials Provided by the Restaurant” and “Materials Provided by the Employee.”

How Do I Test a Set of Instructions?

Assignment

Your assignment is to test your Instructions. Use either performance tests or understandability tests (see below). If you use performance tests, plan on having two or more testers. If you use understandability tests, plan on having four or more testers. The day your Set of Instructions is due, you will hand in a completed copy of either a Form for a Performance Test of a Set of Instructions or a completed copy of an Understandability Test. A copy of the Form for a Performance Test of a Set of Instructions and an example of an Understandability Test appear at the end of today's reading. Make a copy of the Form for a Performance Test of a Set of Instructions and fill it out for one tester or create your own Understandability Test and fill it out for one tester, then hand it in with your Set of Instructions when the Set of Instructions is due. You may copy the Form for a Performance Test of a Set of Instructions; you don't need to retype it. When you test your Instructions, you want to discover whether they are good enough to get the job done. That is, can your target audience do the procedure you are writing about by following your Instructions? You also want to find out how you can improve your Instructions.

What are the two major kinds of tests you can use to test your Instructions?

- 1) **Performance Tests.** In a performance test, you give your Instructions to someone and watch as he or she performs the steps of the Instructions. See the form for a performance test at the end of this section of the Study Guide.
- 2) **Understandability Tests.** In an understandability test, you test whether your Instructions can be understood by the test reader. For example, you can have someone read your Instructions, then give him or her a short quiz to test whether your Instructions are written clearly. (Remember that you are testing the Instructions, not the tester.) See the sample understandability test near the end of this section of the Study Guide.

Note: If relevant, you may use both kinds of tests for your Set of Instructions.

Advice for Performance Tests of Your Instructions

1. When possible, use testers who are members of your target audience.

The main point is to choose testers who don't already know how to do the procedure. If they already know how to do the procedure, they don't need to read your Instructions.

Q: What is a target audience?

A: The target audience consists of the people for whom you are writing the communication.

Q: Who are test users?

A: The test users are the people who will read and use your Instructions as part of a test to determine whether your Instructions are clearly written.

Q: Why wouldn't you use an expert as a test user for your performance test?

A: An expert already knows how to do the procedure, so the expert will be able to do the procedure even if your Instructions are badly written. For your test users, choose someone who does not know how to perform the procedure for which you have written the Instructions.

An expert will not make a good test user for your performance test, but an expert will make an excellent reviewer for your Instructions.

If the target audience for your Set of Instructions on how to use e-mail is people who have never used e-mail before, your test users should be people who have never used e-mail before.

If the target audience for your Set of Instructions on how to make a scrunchi is 10- to 16-year-old girls, your testers should be 10- to 16-year-old girls. However, if you don't know any 10- to 16-year-old girls in Athens, you may have to use first-year Ohio University female students who have not made scrunchis in years. Do your best to choose testers who are as close to your target audience as possible.

Note: This and a few other guidelines also applies to test readers in understandability tests.

2. Have more than one test, using more than one tester.

If you use just one tester, that tester may not be a true representative of your target audience. He or she may be much smarter (or much dumber) than the typical member of your target audience.

If you use a performance test, have at least two testers. If you use an understandability test, have at least four testers.

3. Keep your test users safe.

This is an ethical guideline. Testers should know of any possible dangers during the testing process. That way, they can make an informed decision to either participate in the testing process or not participate in the testing process. Of course, many tests involve no danger at all. If that is the case with your test, you should tell the testers that (unless it is obvious). On the other hand, some tests do involve danger. If that is the case with your test, you should tell the test users that.

Q: What should you do if you are writing a Set of Instructions on a dangerous procedure such as rappelling or cleaning a gun or skydiving?

A: Use an understandability test, not a performance test.

If your test users are not wearing safety goggles when they should be wearing safety goggles, tell them to put on their safety goggles. When you revise your Set of Instructions, make "Put on safety goggles" a step and add a note or warning about why wearing safety goggles is important.

In this course, if a procedure is dangerous, use an understandability test, not a performance test.

4. Make the location for your performance test a place where the target audience would use your instructions.

If you are using a performance test, the best location for your test is a place where the target audience would use your instructions.

If your Set of Instructions is on how to change a flat tire, a good location for a performance test of your Instructions would be a parking lot or by the side of a street or road. (Make sure that it is a safe location.)

If your Set of Instructions is on how to stretch properly in an apartment or house, a good location for a performance test of your Instructions would be an apartment or house.

5. Watch—and listen to—your test users as they perform the steps.

Sit or stand beside your test users during the test—but be unobtrusive.

Ask your test users to use your draft the same ways your target audience will. Your target audience will read each step, then perform it, and so should your testers.

Q: What can you learn from watching your test users?

A: You can notice where they make mistakes and where they look puzzled. After the test users finish the procedure, you can ask why they looked puzzled during step so-and-so.

Ask your readers to make comments orally while using your instructions. For example, “Step 5 is easy, but I don’t understand the phrase “round-bracket code” in step 6.”

Q: What can you learn from listening to your test users’ comments?

A: You can learn which steps they think are easy and which steps they think are difficult.

6. Don’t explain the steps orally to the test users.

Q: What should you do if the test users ask you questions?

A: Tell the test users to read the Instructions, not ask you questions. If you tell the test users how to do everything, you are no longer testing your Instructions.

Almost the only time that you will tell the test users what to do is when they are completely stuck and cannot proceed further. In that case, you would tell them what to do so that you can test the rest of the steps. Of course, you will have to revise the step that the test users got stuck on, and you should test the revised step to be sure that the revision is successful. In addition, if the test users are about to be injured or to cause expensive damage, you will warn them.

I repeat: If you tell the test users what to do, you are not testing your Instructions. If your test users ask you a question, tell them to read the step carefully and do what it tells them to do.

7. Interview your test users after the test.

Q: If you have stressed in your introduction the benefits of performing the procedure you describe in your Instructions, how can you learn whether the test user understands those benefits?

A: You can ask the test user this question: “What are the benefits of knowing how to do this procedure?”

Q: In your Set of Instructions, how do you plan to use the introduction to affect your target audience’s attitudes?

A: One thing you will do in your introduction is to motivate the testers to read and use your Instructions instead of trying to figure out how to do things on their own. (You may also want to convince the readers of the importance of obeying safety precautions.)

Here are some typical questions you can ask after your test:

- What do you think of my Instructions?
- Where did you have difficulty?
- How can I improve my Instructions?
- What are the benefits of knowing how to do the procedure?
- What do you think of my visual aids?

8. Take notes during the test and during the interview.

You may use a form for this purpose. Be sure to record problems, their causes, and their solutions.

For example:

Problem	Cause(s) of Problem	Solution(s) of Problem
1. After completing a step, test user hunted for the next step.	Step numbers aren’t emphasized enough.	1. Put step numbers in their own column. 2. Put white space between steps.
2. Test user couldn’t do step 10.	Test user didn’t understand what the phrase “box stalls” meant.	Define “box stalls.”
3. Test user couldn’t do step 11.	Test user didn’t know where the switch is located.	Label the switch on the visual aid.

You should also record the answers your test users give to your questions.

For example:

Q: How can I improve my Instructions?

A: Test user recommended that I add a glossary defining unfamiliar terms.

9. Test early and often, when appropriate.

You can test more than one draft. Some writers test a draft in the afternoon, revise it during the evening, test the new draft the next afternoon, revise it during the next evening, and so on.

Q: Suppose you will have two tests of a Set of Instructions the same day—what precautions should you take?

A: Be sure that the second test user doesn't learn how to do the procedure by watching the first test user. During the first test, have the second test user wait in another room.

10. Revise your Set of Instructions.

From your tests, you should learn a few things to do to improve your Set of Instructions. Unless you make these changes to your Set of Instructions, you are not getting the benefit you and your readers should get from the performance test.

Other Questions:

1) How many tests do you need of your Instructions?

Two or more are preferred for a performance test; four or more are preferred for an understandability test. Of course, if you wish and it is relevant, you can have both performance tests and understandability tests of your Instructions.

2) Do you need visual aids in the test draft of the Instructions?

Yes. Remember that your Instructions consist of both the written steps and the visual aids. If you test a draft without visual aids, you are testing only part of your Instructions.

3) Should you take your photographs during the test?

No. Concentrate on the test, not on taking photographs.

4) How good a draft of your Set of Instructions do you need for testing purposes?

Make it a good draft. If it has obvious errors, the test user will point out the obvious errors—errors that you would have discovered on your own. Use tests to discover errors that you would not have found on your own.

5) What should you do if you are writing a Set of Instructions on a dangerous procedure such as rappelling or cleaning a gun or skydiving?

Use an understandability test, not a performance test.

Explain How You Would Test Each of the Following Communications:

- 1) Instructions on how to be a server at a local restaurant.
- 2) Instructions on how to diaper a baby. (Assume that you do not have a baby for the test.)
- 3) Instructions on how to build a campfire.
- 4) Instructions on how to prepare a store for opening.
- 5) Instructions on how to skydive.
- 6) Instructions on how to fill out a parking ticket.
- 7) Instructions on how to mount and laminate a visual aid to be used in a class.
- 8) Instructions on how to use an audiometer.
- 9) Instructions on how to take blood pressure.
- 10) Instructions on how to trim hair.
- 11) Instructions on how to make a pizza at a fast-food pizzeria.
- 12) Instructions on how to fill out a form used at work.
- 13) A tutorial on how to use Excel to create a graph.
- 14) Instructions on how to hunt deer.
- 15) Instructions on how to perform a biology experiment.
- 16) Instructions on how to lift weights.
- 17) Instructions on how to connect a TV and VCR to a stereo system.
- 18) Instructions on how to make a potato gun.
- 19) Instructions on how to make candles.
- 20) Instructions on how to perform a chemistry experiment.

- 21) Instructions on how to clean a firearm.
- 22) Instructions on how to take an order for a wedding cake.
- 23) Instructions on how to create a Mii character on a Nintendo Wii game system.
- 24) Instructions on how to wrap a present.

Exercise: How will you test your Set of Instructions?

“Can You Teach Me How to Do Something Remarkable?”

A man named Pen-ju came to the Buddhist priest Si-tien and said, “In my life, I have tried to accomplish something remarkable, but I have failed. Can you teach me how to do something remarkable?” Si-tien agreed to teach Pen-ju, and the first task he set for him was to make a pair of sandals out of straw. After many attempts, Pen-ju succeeded in making a pair of sandals that satisfied Si-tien. Next, Si-tien told Pen-ju to stand in the mud, then walk out of the mud and clean his sandals. In addition, he told Pen-ju to do this over and over again without stopping, except for meals and sleep. Pen-ju complained that this work was completely unnecessary, but Si-tien said that unless he did it, he would teach him nothing. After several weeks had passed, during which time Pen-ju had cleaned his sandals thousands of times, Si-tien told Pen-ju, “Before, you were unable to accomplish anything remarkable because you lacked persistence. Now you have learned persistence, so go out into the World, apply your persistence to an important task, and accomplish something remarkable.”

Children are the Best Teachers

When world-class women’s gymnastics coaches Bela and Marta Karolyi defected from Romania to the United States, they did not know English and had a difficult time learning it. When they brought Andrea, their young daughter, to the United States, she also did not know English, and they were worried about her. They tried a public school and a private school, but at both schools the teachers did not pay particular attention to Andrea, who sat silently. Eventually, however, Andrea picked up English on her own. Bela saw her speaking to some American kids, and he asked if she was speaking Romanian or Hungarian to them. Andrea replied, “I’m talking like everybody else.” After that experience, Bela and Marta decided that “the best teachers were the children.”

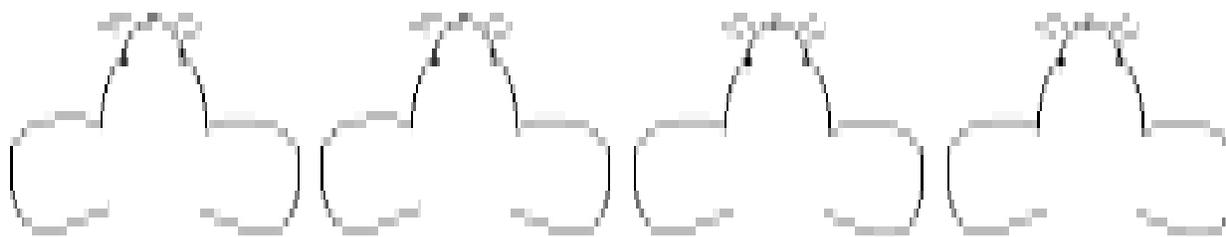
**Understandability Test for a Set of Instructions About Animal Experimentation in the
Edison Biotechnology Laboratory**

Name of Instructions Writer: _____ Test Location: _____
 Name of Test Reader: _____ Test Date/Time: _____
 Topic of Instructions _____

- T F No special clothing is required to work with mice.
- T F One should bring ice into the mouse colony before beginning.
- T F Four weeks is the proper age for a mouse to be weaned.
- T F It is not necessary to separate pups by sex.
- T F Grasping by the tail is the proper method of picking up a mouse.
- T F The difference between sexes is characterized by the spacing of genital openings.
- T F A male has much closer genital openings than a female.
- T F It is not necessary to tare the scale before use.
- T F One should record the weight in the mouse records and the identification card.

Briefly describe how you would grasp a mouse for ear notching.

On the pictures provided, draw how you would label the following mice, 5, 42, 179, 2961.



- T F You can cut the entire tail off when obtaining the sample.
- T F If the mouse bleeds, you did something drastically wrong. Get help immediately.
- T F You can randomly put the tail sample in any tube.
- T F Never put any food directly with the mice. It promotes laziness. (Continued)

Understandability Test, Page 2

Questions and Answers

- What do you think of my Instructions?
- Did you notice any typos I can correct?
- Where did you have difficulty? Why?
- How can I improve my Instructions?
- What are the benefits of knowing how to do the procedure?
- What do you think of my visual aids?
- How can I improve my visual aids?

Form for a Performance Test of a Set of Instructions

Test Information

Name of Instructions Writer: _____

Name of Test User: _____

Test Location: _____

Test Date/Time: _____

Topic of Instructions: _____

Problems Discovered—Record Each Problem, Its Cause(s), and Its Solution(s)

Note: If more room is needed, write on back.

Problem	Cause(s) of Problem	Solution(s) of Problem
1.		
2.		
3.		

Questions and Answers

- What do you think of my Instructions?

- Did you notice any typos I can correct?

- Where did you have difficulty? Why?

- How can I improve my Instructions?

- What are the benefits of knowing how to do the procedure?

- What do you think of my visual aids?

- How can I improve my visual aids?

Class 6: The Set of Instructions Project: Improving Instructions; Doublespeak

How Can I Improve My Instructions?

The first thing we will do in class is to look at a few badly written sets of Instructions, and we will talk about ways to improve those Instructions. You are welcome to bring in a copy of any badly written Instructions you have come across, so that I can use them in future courses.

Proofreading Tips

Create your draft early so that you can test it and revise it and proofread it several times. Also, create your visual aids early so you can evaluate them and improve them if needed.

Read this Study Guide because it contains much valuable information about writing Sets of Instructions and creating visual aids. Also, read the appendix titled “Some Common Rules of Writing.”

Use the checklists in this Study Guide.

Review Your Previously Graded Papers

Are you making the same mistakes over and over? If so, sit down and study and learn not to make those mistakes. Study any handouts I have given you about common errors in grammar and punctuation. Try not to make the mistakes you have made previously. It’s up to you to learn this; the teacher can’t learn it for you. Many students do not make many errors in punctuation and grammar; unfortunately, they make the same mistakes over and over.

Use Correct Punctuation When Telling the Reader to Look at the Visual Aids

Some correct examples:

1. Turn on the computer. See Figure 1.
1. Turn on the computer. (See Figure 1.)
1. Turn on the computer (Fig. 1).
1. Turn on the computer (Figure 1).

Note where parentheses are used, and note where a period is used. The basic rule is to put a period at the end of the sentence. (Sometimes, what is inside the parentheses is a sentence; sometimes, what is inside the parentheses is a part of the sentence.)

Have You Provided All Necessary Visual Aids?

Sometimes you will discover from your tests that you need to provide more visual aids.

If you are writing about equipment, you may need to provide a photograph or drawing of the equipment. On the photograph or drawing, you may need to provide labels identifying the various parts of the equipment. For example, if you are writing about cleaning a handgun, you will need to identify the various parts such as the slide and the safety button to the reader.

Color

Use black and white ink for early drafts. Save your color ink for the visual aids in your final draft. However, it's a good idea to use color in the draft that you will test.

For More Information

See “Instructions Checklists #1 and #2” in Class 7 and Class 8.

How Do I Avoid Dangling Modifiers in My Set of Instructions?

Definition

“A dangling modifier fails to refer logically to any word in the sentence.”—Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*

Example

The following sentence says that the readers will be writing the Instructions:

Dangling Modifier: By writing my Instructions, the readers will understand the importance of following safety procedures in the laboratory.

Note: The phrase “By writing my Instructions” modifies what follows it; in this case, it modifies “the readers,” which is incorrect.

How to Get Rid of the Dangling Modifier

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who is writing the Instructions.

Correct: By writing my Instructions, I will help the readers to understand the importance of following safety procedures in the laboratory.

Note: The phrase “By writing my Instructions” modifies what follows it; in this case, it modifies “I,” which is correct.

What is Doublespeak?

“Doublespeak is language that pretends to communicate but really doesn’t. It is language that makes the bad seem good, the negative appear positive, the unpleasant appear attractive or at least tolerable. Doublespeak is language that avoids or shifts responsibility, language that is at variance with its real or purported meaning. It is language that conceals or prevents thought; rather than extending thought, doublespeak limits it.”—William Lutz, author of *Doublespeak*

Examples of Doublespeak

- A defense contractor sold \$450 “unidirectional impact generators” to the Pentagon. In non-doublespeak language, they were claw hammers that normally sold for \$10. (Source: Rose B. and Nathra Nader. *It Happened in the Kitchen: Recipes for Food and Thought*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Study of Responsive Law, 1991, p. 156.)
- “A Canadian military spokesman calls a helicopter crash a ‘departure from normal flight.’ The National Agricultural Chemical Association changes its name to the American Crop Protection Association. Soap dispensers become ‘hand cleansing systems.’ Logging companies no longer ‘bulldoze,’ they ‘access timber.’ O.J.’s defense team uses the term ‘marital discord’ instead of wife-beating. The U.N. sends troops for ‘armed humanitarian interventions.’ The University of California at Berkeley now has a ‘department of human biodynamics’ (formerly physical education). Prostitutes are ‘commercial sex workers.’ ... Belts are made of ‘genuine simulated leather.’” (Source: <<http://www.chiprowe.com/magrev/doublespeak.html>>.)
- “We don’t necessarily discriminate. We simply exclude certain types of people,” said Lt. Col. Gerald Wellman, an ROTC instructor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on the military’s ban on gays. (Source: *Newsweek*, 25 May 1992, p. 21.)

How Can I Avoid Doublespeak?

A very good way to avoid doublespeak is to follow this piece of advice from Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style*: “Avoid fancy words.” As Mr. White writes so well, “Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready and able.”

Books by William Lutz, Doublespeak Expert

William Lutz is professor of English at Rutgers University. These are some of his books:

- *Beyond Nineteen Eighty-Four: Doublespeak in a Post-Orwellian Age*. Edited by William Lutz. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989.
- *Doublespeak Defined: Cut through the Bull**** and Get to the Point*. New York: HarperResource, 1999.
- *The New Doublespeak: Why No One Knows What Anyone’s Saying Anymore*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996.
- *Doublespeak: From “Revenue Enhancement” to “Terminal Living,” How Government, Business, Advertisers, and Others Use Language to Deceive You*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Doublespeak Quiz

The following are all real-life examples of doublespeak. Match each expression with its meaning. Write the letter of your answer on the line provided.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. ___ front-leaning rest exercises | A. polluted |
| 2. ___ preemptive counterattack | B. poison gas |
| 3. ___ air support | C. ghetto |
| 4. ___ servicing the target | D. greeting cards |
| 5. ___ Wood interdental stimulators | E. push-ups |
| 6. ___ collateral damage | F. acid rain |
| 7. ___ tactical redeployment | G. toothpick |
| 8. ___ large potentially disruptive reentry system | H. toilet |
| 9. ___ career scanning professional | I. invasion |
| 10. ___ social-expression product | J. killing the enemy |
| 11. ___ non-performing assets | K. fired from job |
| 12. ___ management turnovers | L. recession |
| 13. ___ exceeded | M. dump |
| 14. ___ controlled flight into terrain | N. cashier |
| 15. ___ negative patient-care outcome | O. civilian casualties |
| 16. ___ inhalation hazard | P. nuclear bomb |
| 17. ___ resource development park | Q. plane crash |
| 18. ___ adult correctional institution | R. death in a hospital |
| 19. ___ environmentally destabilized | S. taxes |
| 20. ___ energetic disassembly | T. genocide |
| 21. ___ guest-relation facility | U. retreat |
| 22. ___ sub-standard housing | V. bombing |
| 23. ___ revenue enhancement | W. bad loans |
| 24. ___ poorly buffered precipitation | X. job layoffs |
| 25. ___ period of accelerated negative growth | Y. nuclear-power-plant explosion |
| 26. ___ ethnic cleansing | Z. prison |

Source: http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=364x500427

Date Downloaded: 22 June 2011

Class 7: The Set of Instructions Project: Choosing Words

Checklist: Use the “Things to Check for in Your Instructions” in today’s reading to make sure you have a good draft for the Peer Review.

How Do I Choose Words?

“The difference between the right word and the nearly right word is the same as that between lightning and the lightning bug.”—Mark Twain

1. Use words with specific meanings.

Why should you use words with specific meanings? Words with specific meanings contain more information than words with general meanings. For example, a “visual aid” could be a screen shot, a drawing, a diagram, clip art, a photograph, etc. A “picture” could be a photograph, painting, or drawing, but a “photograph” refers to only one kind of visual aid.

2. Use words that your readers will understand.

How can you identify words that your readers won’t know?

- 1) You can have a few members of your target audience read the communication and tell you the words they don’t understand.
- 2) If you are writing Instructions, you can test the Instructions and let the performance test or understandability test tell you whether the readers understand the words you use.
- 3) You can put yourself in the place of the reader and try to figure out if the reader will know the words you use.
- 4) You can use a combination of the ideas above.

When the readers are unfamiliar with some terms that you must use, you must define or explain the terms. If examples will be useful, use examples. If many examples will be useful, use many examples. You may end up defining a word in a note, or if many words need to be defined, you may have a glossary as an appendix. (Tell the reader in the introduction that a glossary appears as an appendix.) In your steps, you may underline the words that are defined in the glossary. (Tell the reader in the introduction that the underlined words are defined in the glossary.)

I get a physical checkup once a year. Sometimes, my physician will speak to me using specialized medical terminology that I don’t understand. When that happens, I ask him, “Can you say that in English?”

You can use technical jargon when your readers will understand it. If you are an engineer who is writing for an engineering audience, you can use engineering terms and concepts. If you are an engineer who is writing for a general audience, you will have to use simpler words or explain the engineering words and concepts you use.

3. Avoid sesquipedalianism (foot-and-a-half-long words).

In business writing especially, you want the reader to be able to immediately understand what you write without having to use a dictionary.

Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* gives this advice: "Avoid fancy words: Avoid the elaborate, the pretentious, the coy, and the cute. Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready and able."

Instead of the words "utilize" and "oftentimes," you should use the words "use" and "often."

"Poor [William] Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use."—Ernest Hemingway

4. Don't annoy the reader by misusing words.

Using words correctly is difficult to do, since if you use a word, you usually think that you are using it accurately. Few people will deliberately misuse language. Some misuse of words occurs because of lack of knowledge. One way to learn to use words accurately is to look at the comments I make on your papers. If you find out that you are misusing "affect" and "effect," then you can make up flashcards to help you learn how to use those words accurately. Be sure to study carefully any handouts that I give you about word choice (and punctuation). Also, see the appendix titled "Some Common Writing Rules."

On the other hand, some misuse of words occurs because of lack of proofreading. Proofread, and if the document is important, proofread three times.

- Mrs. Malaprop (a character in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's play *The Rivals*) misuses words humorously. For example, she refers to "a progeny of learning" rather than "a prodigy of learning." She also advises a character to "illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory" rather than "eliminate him, I say, quite from your memory" or "obliterate him, I say, quite from your memory." Mrs. Malaprop is such a successful character that you can find the term "malapropism," meaning a humorous misuse of words, in dictionaries today.
- Art Linkletter once invited an engaged couple to be married on his TV show, then he invited the TV audience to tune in next week and see the happy couple "consummate their marriage." Mr. Linkletter's producer had to explain to him that the marriage ceremony and the consummation of the marriage are two separate events.

- A nurse went into a hospital room in Great Britain during World War II and asked the patient, “How are you today?” The patient replied, “I’m in perjury.” Chances are, the patient meant to say, “I’m in agony” or “I’m in purgatory.”

Here is a person with a good reason for using big words and for misusing a word: Hank Aaron could defuse arguments with humor. During one of his at-bats, a pitch was ruled a ball by the umpire, and Cincinnati Reds catcher Smokey Burgess strenuously disagreed. It looked like a major situation was developing between the catcher and the umpire, but Mr. Aaron told Mr. Burgess, “Kindly do not agitate the arbiter. He can’t be as pluperfect as you.” Both the catcher and the umpire laughed, and the game resumed.

Note that the words “aid” and “aide” are different. An aide is a human helper—for example, a general’s aide. Use “aid” when you are writing about visual aids.

Consider the registers of the words you use. Some words are meant to appear only in certain kinds of writing. Those kinds of writing are known as that word’s register. As writers, you must use those words that match the kind of writing you are doing (unless you are deliberately writing badly or for humorous effect).

When I was growing up in Zanesville, Ohio, my family often went to the drive-in theater. During the intermission between features, the theater owner urged everyone to go into the little restaurant on the premises and buy some “succulent” fried chicken. “Succulent” is an advertising word, and it would look odd in a business letter.

5. Avoid wordiness.

Wordy: Due to the fact that you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Not Wordy: Because you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Wordy: In spite of the fact that she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Not Wordy: Although she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Wordy: Despite the fact that she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Not Wordy: Although she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Wordy: For the reason that you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Not Wordy: Because you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Wordy: The reason that the problem exists is because

Not Wordy: The problem exists because

Wordy: Because of the fact that you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Not Wordy: Because you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Wordy: For a long period of time, I have wanted to get married.

Not Wordy: For a long time, I have wanted to get married.

Wordy: There are three reasons why you should accept my recommendations.

Not Wordy: You should accept my recommendations for three reasons.

Wordy: It has come to my attention that

Not Wordy: I have learned

Wordy: In the lease, it states

Not Wordy: The lease states

Wordy: In spite of the fact that he is rich, he is cheap.

Not Wordy: Although he is rich, he is cheap.

You should be aware that the phrases *there are* and *there is* and *it is* are often wordy and can be deleted.

Wordy: There are three reasons why you should accept my recommendations.

Not Wordy: You should accept my recommendations for three reasons.

Wordy: There are three recommendations that I wish to make.

Not Wordy: I wish to make three recommendations.

Wordy: When I started working in the chemistry lab, there were several techniques that I did not know.

Not Wordy: When I started working in the chemistry lab, I did not know several techniques.

Wordy: My guidebook will be especially helpful when new employees have questions and there is no one around to answer them.

Not Wordy: My guidebook will be especially helpful when new employees have questions and no one is around to answer them.

Wordy: There are four problems that I will discuss: low morale, poor safety features, increased costs, and decreased profits.

Not Wordy: I wish to discuss four problems: low morale, poor safety features, increased costs, and decreased profits.

Mistakes in Student Instructions

- A Set of Instructions about replacing a water hose on a washing machine used the word “washer” to mean two different things. Sometimes it referred to a washer that was used with a nut and a bolt. Sometimes it referred to a washing machine. The reader of the Instructions had to figure out what “washer” meant each time it was used. The writer should have used the term “washer” to refer to the washer that is used with a nut and a bolt, and she should have used the term “washing machine” to refer to the washing machine.
- A student wrote a Set of Instructions on how to wrap a gift. In the Instructions, she used the word “gift” to refer to the object that was placed in the box, and she used the word “gift” to refer to the entire package (the object in the box, and the box itself). To keep things absolutely clear, she should use different words for different things. For example, in the introduction, she could define her words. She could explain that when she uses the word “present,” she is referring to the object that is placed in the box, and when she uses the word “gift,” she is referring to the entire package (the object in the box, and the box itself). That can help the reader to keep from being mixed up.

Use the Same Words to Refer to the Same Things

- If you refer to a “tire gauge” in your List of Materials, be sure to use “tire gauge” (not “pressure gauge”) in your steps.
- If you refer to “cuticle remover” in your List of Materials, be sure to use “cuticle remover” (not “cuticle cream”) in your steps.
- If you refer to an “orangestick” in your List of Materials, be sure to use “orangestick” (not “stick”) in your steps.

What is Gobbledygook?

If you wish to avoid Gobbledygook, avoid writing like this:

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must be taken into account.

How can you do that? By following the advice about choosing words that you read earlier in this Study Guide. For example:

Choose plain words over fancy words.

Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* gives this advice: "Avoid fancy words: Avoid the elaborate, the pretentious, the coy, and the cute. Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready and able."

It is never a good idea to send the reader to a dictionary to decode what you wrote. (Of course, if you are an engineer writing to other engineers, you may use the specialized engineering terminology that engineers know and understand.)

"Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena ..."

Are you wondering where the "Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena ..." quote above came from? To make a point about bad writing, George Orwell—a good writer—rewrote a famous passage from the Bible (Ecclesiastes):

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happen to them all.

Gobbledygook Proverbs

Several common proverbs have been translated into gobbledygook. Can you match them with the easily understood proverbs that follow the gobbledygook proverbs?

1. ____ If a large solid-hoofed mammal becomes available to you without compensation, refrain from casting your faculty for seeing into the oral cavity of such a creature.
2. ____ Each vaporous mass suspended in the firmament has an interior decoration of metallic hue.
3. ____ It is not advantageous to place the sum total of your barnyard collections into the same wicker receptacle.

4. ____ Feathered bipeds of a kindred mind in their segregated environment associate with a high degree of amiability.
5. ____ Deviation from the ordinary or common routine of existence is that which gives zest to man's cycle of existence.
6. ____ He who locks himself into the arms of Morpheus promptly at eventide, and starts the day before it is officially announced by the rising sun, excels in physical fitness, increases his economic assets and celebrates with remarkable efficiency.
7. ____ Do not traverse a structure erected to afford passage over a waterway until the time of drawing nigh unto it.
8. ____ Superfluous chronological dispatch institutes riddance of valued effects.
9. ____ There's no value to be derived from demanding attention by loud screeches over fallen white liquid derived from the lactic glands of a female bovine.
10. ____ An excess of culinary experts impairs the quality of a thin derivative of meat.
11. ____ A body of persons abiding in a domicile of silica combined with metallic oxides should not carelessly project small geological specimens.
12. ____ A canine that gives vent to his sentiments by a series of vocal efforts, rarely finds use of his bicuspid.
13. ____ A vessel under optical supervision never reaches the temperature of 212 degrees.
14. ____ A consolidated mass which forms the earth's crust, and which progresses by turning over upon its surface without slipping, does not successfully gather together a cryptogamous plant.
15. ____ The placement of the termination as precedent of the commencement should never be assessed.
16. ____ Never situate the conveyance and its accouterments forward of the perambulating, ambulatory equine.
17. ____ A chronic disposition to inquiry deprived the domestic feline carnivorous quadruped of its vital quality.
18. ____ An individual who vacillates when there is need of action will find himself beyond the hope of future success.

19. ____ Refrain from enumerating your poultry precursory to their incubation and emergence from their embryonic habitat.
20. ____ Exercise your visual facilities prior to executing a jump.
21. ____ A feathered biped in the terminal part of the arm equals in value a pair of feathered bipeds in densely branched shrubbery.

The Proverbs (In Alphabetical Order)

- A. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- B. A rolling stone gathers no moss.
- C. A watched pot never boils.
- D. Birds of a feather flock together.
- E. Curiosity killed the cat.
- F. Don't count your chickens before they are hatched!
- G. Don't cross that bridge until you come to it.
- H. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
- I. Don't put all your eggs in one basket!
- J. Don't put the cart before the horse.
- K. Early to bed, and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise!
- L. Every cloud has a silver lining.
- M. Haste makes waste.
- N. He who hesitates, loses.
- O. His bark is worse than his bite.
- P. Look before you leap!
- Q. No use crying over spilled milk.
- R. People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
- S. The ends do not justify the means.
- T. Too many cooks spoil the broth.
- U. Variety is the spice of life.

Instructions Checklist #1

Titles and Bylines

- “How to” titles for instructions are very good. Ex: How to Give Yourself a Manicure.
- The title should be emphasized. Make it 14 point, bold, and centered.
- Your byline (By So-and-So) should be 12 point.

Instructions About Exercise

If you are writing about exercise, you should have a note in your Instructions telling the readers to get a physical checkup from their physician before beginning this or any other exercise program. This warning can help keep you from being sued.

Avoid Plagiarism

For example, you may want to have a glossary at the end of your Set of Instructions. It is OK to use definitions that you download from the WWW or copy from a book AS LONG AS you give credit to the source. In the introduction, make clear what is the source of the definitions. If you do not do this, you are guilty of plagiarism.

Computers

- If you writing for IBM or compatibles only, say so.
- If Windows is required, say so.
- If your Instructions are for both IBM and Macintosh, say so.
- If your Instructions require a certain version of a program (e.g., Microsoft Word 2008 for Mac), say so.

Page Numbers

In general, you should use page numbers. Often, the readers find them helpful (for example, see Figure 3 on page 4). I prefer that page numbers appear at the bottom center or top right of the page.

Exclamation Points

Just one exclamation point is enough.

Wrong: Just one exclamation point is enough!!!!

Right: Just one exclamation point is enough!

Content

Remember that your Instructions must be complete in order to be useful to the reader. If you are writing Instructions for a first-time user of e-mail, then you must include Instructions for both reading and sending e-mail. If your Instructions cover only how to send e-mail, they won't be as

useful as they should be to the reader. Also, remember to write about procedures in an order that is useful to the reader. If you are writing Instructions for a first-time user of e-mail, don't start your Instructions by telling the reader how to respond to e-mail (a first-time user won't have any e-mail messages to respond to). It's best to write first about composing an e-mail message and sending it, then to write about reading an e-mail message, and then to write about responding to an e-mail message. This is logical because the first-time user would most likely first compose and send an e-mail message, then read the e-mail message that is sent in reply, and finally respond to that e-mail message.

Parallelism in Steps

Often, parallelism is important in Instructions. For example, steps can be written in a parallel manner if they involve the same action. Note: The ellipsis (...) indicates steps that are not printed below.

Wrong: 5. Place the dishes in the dishwasher. ...
 10. Insert the silverware into the dishwasher. ...
 13. In the dishwasher, rest the pots and pans.

Right: 5. Place the dishes in the dishwasher. ...
 10. Place the silverware in the dishwasher. ...
 13. Place the pots and pans in the dishwasher.

Use of the Word "Manual"

If you are writing a Set of Instructions that is long enough to be bound, then you may say that you are writing an **instruction manual**; however, if your Set of Instructions is only a few pages long, don't call it a "manual."

Periods

After each step, use a period. The steps are complete sentences. For example, this step is a complete sentence: "Press <Enter>." The subject ("You") is understood.

Word Choice

Use the same words to refer to the same thing. If you write "tire gauge" in your List of Materials, don't write "pressure gauge" in your Instructions.

Writing Numbered Steps

When writing numbered steps, don't use the word "then" or "now" or "next" at the beginning of a step. The number will tell the reader that this is the next step to do.

Wrong: 5. Then press **Enter**.
 Right: 5. Press **Enter**.

Wrong: 5. Next press **Enter**.
 Right: 5. Press **Enter**.

Keep the Visual Aid and the Step It Goes With on the Same Page

Keep the visual aid and the step it goes with on the same page. If you are unable to do this, tell the reader where the visual aid is located. For example:

Note: See Figure 3 on page 4.

Use Imperative Verbs in Your Steps

Bad:

1. You must have a program called Kaza. If you don't have Kaza, you must look up <www.Kaza.com>, and download it.

Good:

1. Determine whether you have the program called Kaza on your hard drive.

- If you do have Kaza, go on to the next step.
- If you don't have Kaza, go to <www.Kaza.com> and follow the instructions for downloading the program.

Page Layout

- If you use a 2-column page layout that has text in one column and visual aids in the other column, be aware that you need to use both columns on the final page of your instructions. (Your instructions will look odd if you use only one column on the last page.)
- Do not center your steps. Centering staggers your step numbers and makes it more difficult for the readers to quickly find the step number they want.
- Have a 1-inch top margin on each page (except perhaps the first page).
- The size of your bottom margin may vary.

Visual Aids

- Remember that you aren't allowed to simply copy something from a magazine or book. You must create your own original visual aids. The instructions you write must consist of both text and visual aids.
- In some cases, I may allow a student to use a visual aid downloaded from the WWW, provided 1) **the student gets permission from me to do this ahead of time**, 2) **the student gives credit to the source**, and 3) **the student also creates at least one original visual aid**. I will allow downloads that show a piece of equipment (e.g., a computer or a camera), but I will

not allow downloads that show how to perform the steps—you need to create those visual aids.

- If your Instructions are about creating a product, then one visual aid should show the finished product. For example, if you are writing about making a tank top, your final (or first, or both) photograph could be a photograph of you wearing the tank top that you created while taking your photographs for the Instructions.
- Even if you are drawing your visual aids by hand, you can use your computer or word processor to type “Figure 1” and “Figure 2” and any labels you need. The computer-printed words usually look better than your handwriting (unless you are an expert calligrapher).
- If you write “See Figure 1” in your text, the label “Figure 1” must appear by the visual aid.
- Be aware that the step usually appears first, then the visual aid appears under (or beside) the step.

Comma Splices

Avoid comma splices. If two independent clauses are closely related, join them with a semicolon. Otherwise, you may wish to make two sentences or use a conjunction such as “and” or a dash to join the sentences.

Comma Splice: Dry the rest of your materials as thoroughly as possible, the sponges need to air dry before they can be stored.

Correctly Revised: Dry the rest of your materials as thoroughly as possible; the sponges need to air dry before they can be stored.

Comma Splice: If all areas are evenly covered, place the paint roller into a plastic bag so it does not dry out, not allowing the paint to dry makes the paint easier to remove later.

Correctly Revised: If all areas are evenly covered, place the paint roller into a plastic bag so it does not dry out. Not allowing the paint to dry makes the paint easier to remove later.

Comma Splice: Get a checkup from your physician before beginning this or any other exercise program, this is important for your safety.

Correctly Revised: Get a physical checkup from your physician before beginning this or any other exercise program—this is important for your safety.

Sample Correct Sentences

1. This **Set of Instructions** tells you how to create a graph using Excel 2008 for Mac.
Note: The word “set” is singular.
2. These **Instructions** tell you how to create a graph using Excel 2008 for Mac.
Note: The word “Instructions” is plural.

3. The **audience consists** of elementary schoolteachers.

Note: The word “audience” is singular.

Note: “In American English, collective nouns [such as ‘audience’] are usually treated as being singular rather than plural: They emphasize the group as a unit. Occasionally when there is some reason to draw attention to the individual members of a group, a collective noun may be treated as plural. [For example:]

“Singular: The class respects the teacher.

“Plural: The class are debating among themselves.”

(Source of Note: Diana Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference*)

Note by David Bruce: If “The class are [...]” sounds funny to you, write, “The members of the class are debating among themselves.”

4. These **step-by-step directions** tell you how to create a graph using Excel 2008 for Mac.
 Note: When you put two or more words together to form an adjective that comes before the noun it modifies, use a hyphen to connect the words together.

Use Correct Punctuation When Telling the Reader to Look at the Visual Aids

Two Correct Examples:

8. Click on the **SMS** box. (See Figure 2.)

- Two periods are used because there are two sentences.
- “Click on the **SMS** box” is a complete sentence, and the word “box” is the end of the sentence, so it needs a period after it.
- The capital “S” of “see” in the parentheses indicates that it is a complete sentence.
- The second period appears inside the parentheses because a complete sentence is inside the parentheses.

8. Click on the **SMS** box (Figure 2).

- One period is used because there is one sentence.
- What is inside the parentheses is part of a longer sentence, so the period goes outside the parentheses.

More Examples:

1. Turn on the computer. See Figure 1.

- These are two sentences, so a period appears after each sentence.

1. Turn on the computer (Fig. 1).

- This is one sentence with a parenthetical element within the sentence. Everything inside the parentheses is a part of the sentence, so the period goes outside the end parenthesis.

1. Turn on the computer. (See Figure 1.)

- These are two sentences. “See Figure 1” is a complete sentence inside parentheses, so the period goes inside the end parenthesis.

8. Print the graph. (See Figure 6 on page 7.)

- These are two sentences. “See Figure 6 on page 7” is a complete sentence inside parentheses, so the period goes inside the end parenthesis.

Wordiness

1. **Due to the fact that** you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

Revised: Because you did not finish writing the instruction manual in time for the computer program to be shipped by April 21, you are fired.

2. **In spite of the fact that** she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Revised: Although she did not graduate from college, she is a multi-millionaire.

Dangling Modifiers

Dangling Modifier #1:

Having tested positive for cocaine, the Chief of Police arrested the suspect.

Explanation:

This sentence says that the Chief of Police tested positive for cocaine. It’s much more likely that the suspect tested positive for cocaine.

Correct Sentence:

Having tested positive for cocaine, the suspect was arrested by the Chief of Police.

Or

After the suspect tested positive for cocaine, the Chief of Police arrested him.

(This sentence avoids the use of the passive voice.)

Dangling Modifier #2:

While still in diapers, my father remarried.

Explanation:

This sentence says that my father was still in diapers when he remarried. To correct the sentence, identify who was wearing diapers.

Correct Sentence:

While I was still in diapers, my father remarried.

Avoid Run-On Sentences

Bad: A box will pop-up, that will be the save as box, scroll down to my music folder.

Good: After the **Save As** box pops up, scroll down to the **My Music** folder.

Make the Names of Boxes and Folders Stand Out

Bad: After the save as box pops up, scroll down to the my music folder.

Good: After the **Save As** box pops up, scroll down to the **My Music** folder.

Avoid Wordiness

Bad: Look at the left-hand side of the page.

Good: Look at the left side of the page.

Double-check Your Notes

After “Note:” you should have a complete sentence that begins with a capital letter.

Note: Double-check your notes.

The Importance of Very Careful Word Selection

Jeanie Burt, a nurse at Searcy, Arkansas, knows a colleague who tells about a woman who had had a lot of children, and who asked about using contraception. Nursing staff taught her about using a diaphragm and told her to insert it at night in case she and her husband became intimate. Six weeks later, the woman was pregnant although she insisted that she had inserted the diaphragm every night. It turned out that her husband worked at night and was home during the day. Nurse Burt says that this anecdote underscores “the importance of a thorough history and very careful word selection.”

Is Spelling Important?

Registered nurse Avice H. Kerr points out that “misspellings of clinical terms can have [...] serious effects. Think what might have happened if these errors hadn’t been caught: ‘tracheorrhaphy’ (suturing the trachea) for ‘trachelorrhaphy’ (suturing of the lacerated cervix uteri), or ‘hyphemia’ (blood deficiency) for ‘hyphema’ (hemorrhage within the eye’s anterior chamber).”

Class 8: The Set of Instructions Project: Peer Review

Teacher's Expectations for the Peer Review

Your teacher expects you to do these things:

- Bring a complete, carefully proofread draft to the peer review. Better, bring two copies. At this time, it should be a complete draft with all visual aids and all steps. Remember that you must have at least one original (meaning that you have created it) visual aid in your Set of Instructions.
- Actively read the other person's draft and seriously look for errors that the writer can correct.
- Tell the writer something that he or she has done well.
- Seriously give good advice to the writer about what the writer can do to improve his or her paper.
- Listen carefully to the other person's comments about your paper. Don't be defensive, even if you disagree with some of the other person's comments.
- Try to get at least two peer reviews.
- If you have time after getting the peer reviews, look over and evaluate your paper.
- Don't ask the teacher, "Can we leave now?"

Proofreading Tips

Occasionally, students type "the the" when they mean to type "the." One way to check this is to use the FIND command of your word processing program. A word processing program will often have an EDIT menu. In the EDIT menu, you will often find a FIND command. You can type in "the the," and your word processing program will find every "the the" you have typed in a document. You can also do this for other repeated words: "or or," "an an," etc.

Be sure to use the Checklists in the Study Guide. They identify common errors that you should avoid making.

What Do I Have to Do for the Peer Review?

What is a Peer Review?

In a peer review, you exchange drafts of your communication with other members of the course. They evaluate your writing, you evaluate their writing, then both of you talk about each other's writing, telling what the other person has done right and how the other person can improve his or her communication.

Bring a Good Draft—Not a Zero Draft—to the Review

A zero draft is a seriously incomplete draft. For example, a student may arrive at a peer review with only the first 12 steps of a Set of Instructions. Zero drafts receive zero credit. Bring full drafts to the peer reviews. In some (perhaps all) cases, I may cancel the conference of a student who brings a zero draft to a peer review. I don't want my time wasted, and I don't want the time of the peer reviewers wasted.

What Do You Need to Bring to the Peer Review?

- Two typed copies of the second (or third) draft of your Instructions.
- A full draft, with visual aids, beginning, middle, and end, not a partial draft.
- An alert mind.

Review Your Previously Graded Papers

Are you making the same mistakes over and over? If so, sit down and study and learn not to make those mistakes. Study any handouts I have given you about common errors in grammar and punctuation. Try not to make the mistakes you have made previously. It's up to you to learn this; the teacher can't learn it for you. Many students do not make many errors in punctuation and grammar; unfortunately, they make the same mistakes over and over.

Use the Hints and Reminders

- Use the "Hints and Reminders" in the material for the previous class.

What Should I Check for in Particular?

- If the Set of Instructions has a List of Materials or a List of Materials and Equipment, double-check the list. Each time an item is listed in the steps, check to make sure that it is listed in the list. For example, often a step will say to place newspaper on a table to make cleanup easier later, but the List of Materials will not include the item "newspaper." (If the writer did not put a newspaper in her photograph showing materials, he or she can add this to the List of Materials: "Newspaper (not shown).")
- Make sure that the same word or phrase is used to refer to the same thing. For example, the phrase "tire gauge" should not suddenly become "pressure gauge."
- Make sure that if you write "Repeat step(s) so-and-so" that you have the correct step number listed. Better: Why not cut and paste the step(s) (once the wording is correct) so that you don't make the reader look at a previous step(s)?

Avoid Wordiness

Bad: Look at the left-hand side of the page.

Good: Look at the left side of the page.

How Do I Recognize and Correct Comma Splices?

Definition

A comma splice consists of two independent clauses that are connected with a comma only.

Ex: Sally went to the movies, Bill went to the dance.

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

How to Correct a Comma Splice

You may correct a sentence with a comma splice in several ways:

1. Make two sentences out of it.

Sally went to the movies. Bill went to the dance.

2. Join the sentences together with a comma and a connecting word such as *and, or, but, nor, or yet*.

Sally went to the movies, but Bill went to the dance.

3. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon.

Sally went to the movies; Bill went to the dance.

4. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon, a transition word such as *however* or *moreover*, and a comma.

Sally went to the movies; however, Bill went to the dance.

5. Make one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause.

Although Sally went to the movies, Bill went to the dance.

6. If relevant, use a dash.

Sally went to the movies—Bill went to the dance.

Instructions Checklist #2

- Make sure that you should have a 1-inch top margin on each page. The size of the bottom margin can vary. If you have a lot of white space at the bottom of the page, add a note saying, “Continued on next page.”
- Related Content Together
 - Keep the step and its note on the same page. If you have a lot of white space at the bottom of the page, add a note saying, “Continued on next page.”
 - Keep the step and its warning on the same page. If you have a lot of white space at the bottom of the page, add a note saying, “Continued on next page.”
 - Keep the step and its visual aid on the same page. If you have a lot of white space at the bottom of the page, add a note saying, “Continued on next page.”
- Make sure that each item mentioned in your steps is also listed in your List of Materials (if you have one). Often, items such as newspapers or rags are left out.
- Make sure that you use only one exclamation mark! Don’t use two or more exclamation marks!!!!
- Make sure that capitalization is used consistently in your headings. You may want to capitalize only the first word of each heading, or you may want to capitalize all the important words in the headings. Choose one style and use it consistently.
- Make sure that capitalization is used consistently in your labels. You may want to capitalize only the first word of each label, or you may want to capitalize all the important words in the labels. Choose one style and use it consistently.
- Make sure that each step has one action. If the step does not have an action, it is a note or a warning. If a step has two actions, it should be two steps.
- If you have used a visual aid from the WWW (and gotten my permission to do so), put the source underneath the visual aid.
- Make sure that you have at least one original (meaning that you have created it) visual aid in your Set of Instructions.
- Make sure that you use same word or the same phrase to refer to the same thing. Don’t use different terms to refer to the same thing. You may confuse the reader.
- Put a period at the end of each sentence. “Turn on the computer” is a complete sentence, so put a period at the end. (The subject of the sentence is understood: “You.”)
- Get rid of the phrases “There are” and “There is.” They are passive and wordy.
- Do you have a colon after the word “By” in your byline? If you do, delete it.

Set of Instructions Review Sheet

- Check to see if the Set of Instructions has a title and a byline.
- Check to see if the Set of Instructions has an introduction that motivates the readers to read the Instructions.
- Check to see if the Set of Instructions has at least 24 steps and at least one original aid.
- Check to see if the Set of Instructions gives credit where credit is due. It is best to use all original aids, but in some cases students are allowed to use non-original visual aids as long as they give credit to the source. The best place to give credit for an unoriginal visual aid is immediately underneath the visual aid.
- Check to see if the Set of Instructions gives only one thing to do per step.
- Check to see if the Set of Instructions uses imperative verbs for each step.

Good: Turn the computer on.

Bad: You should now turn on the computer.

- Check to see if the Set of Instructions does not use the word “next” in steps.

The step number will tell the reader that this is the action to perform next.

Incorrect: 5. Next, press <Enter>.

Correct: 5. Press <Enter>.

- Check to see if the Set of Instructions emphasizes important words.

Example: Drag down the **Edit** menu and select **Check Spelling**.

Example: Drag down the <Edit> menu and select <Check Spelling>.

Example: Drag down the “Edit” menu and select “Check Spelling.”

- Check to see if the Set of Instructions has commas and periods inside quotation marks. (This is the American style.)

Press “Enter.”

- **Check to see if the Set of Instructions has numbered steps.**

- **Check to see if the Set of Instructions uses white space between steps.**

The white space will make the Set of Instructions more attractive and less forbidding than a page that is filled with words. Making the Set of Instructions attractive and not forbidding is a technique that will help persuade the reader to read your Instructions.

- **Check to see if the Set of Instructions keeps each step and its visual aid and/or note(s) on the same page.**

- Make the visual aids easy to find. Keep each visual aid on the same page as the step it goes with. This also applies to steps and their associated notes. It is a good idea to do this even though it may leave a lot of white space at the bottom of a page because you have moved a step to the top of the next page. If you are worried about having too much white space at the bottom of a page, you can always write, “Note: Continued on next page.”

- On rare occasions, it may be impossible to keep the visual aid on the same page as the step. For example, you may have a visual aid that takes up an entire page and that the reader must often refer to. In that case, you would make the visual aid an Appendix, and you would let the reader know where the visual aid is located. For example: “See Figure 4 in the Appendix” or “See Figure 4 on page 6.” Usually, however, you can keep the visual aid and its step on the same page.

- **Check to see if the Set of Instructions warns or cautions the readers as necessary.**

If the Set of Instructions is about an exercise program, it should have a disclaimer such as this:

Before beginning this or any other exercise program, consult a physician.

- **Check to see if the Set of Instructions has clear visual aids.**

Are any of the photographs, if the Set of Instructions has photographs, out of focus?

- **Check the Set of Instructions for proofreading errors.**

- **Read the Set of Instructions carefully more than once and make suggestions for improvements.**

- **If you have time, review the Set of Instructions of another person. If not enough time is remaining for a review, check your own Set of Instructions.**

The Most Important Things I Have Learned from Writing the Set of Instructions

Note: In this section, “I” refers to you, the student.

- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that even a Set of Instructions has a persuasive element. For example, I must persuade the readers to read my Set of Instructions because many readers prefer trying to figure out things on their own to following step-by-step directions.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should use as many visual aids as will help the readers. When writing a Set of Instructions, I need to actively search for places in my Instructions where a visual aid will help the readers.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should design my pages to make the readers’ job easy. For example, I should keep a step and the visual aid that goes with that step close together. The visual aid should appear to the side of the step or below the step, if possible. If the visual aid must appear on a page different from the page the step appears on, then I should tell the readers on which page the visual aid appears.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should test my Instructions. It is very easy to leave out an important step or to not explain a term or concept that is unfamiliar to the readers. By testing my Instructions, I can learn whether my readers can use my Instructions to perform the procedure. I can also use testing to see if my Instructions affect the readers’ attitudes in the way I desire—for example, I may want to convince the readers that a certain procedure is fairly easy to learn and is very useful once learned.
- I have learned that when testing Sets of Instructions, I can use either a performance test or an understandability test. In a performance test, I give my Instructions to a test user and ask him or her to perform the Instructions as I watch. In an understandability test, I ask the tester to read the Instructions, then take a quiz I have prepared—it’s important to realize that the quiz is intended to test the understandability of my Instructions, not the intelligence of the tester. Of course, I have learned that it is a good idea to have more than one tester.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that, as necessary, I should warn my readers: To do that, I should make my warnings stand out visually, I should place my warnings so that my readers will read them before performing the action the warnings refer to, I should state the nature of the hazard and the consequences of ignoring the warning, and I should tell my readers what steps to take to protect themselves or avoid damage.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should write each step for rapid comprehension and immediate use. To do this, in each step, I should give my readers just enough information to perform the step, I should present the steps in a list, I should use the active voice and the imperative mood, and I should highlight key words.

- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should help my readers locate the next step quickly. To do this, I should number the steps, I should put blank lines between steps, I should give one action per step, and I should put step numbers in their own column.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that within steps, I should distinguish actions from supporting information. To do this, I should present actions before responses, and I should make actions stand out visually from other material.
For example:
4. Press the RETURN key. The Customer Order Screen will appear.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should group related steps under action-oriented headings. The headings will help to break up a big procedure into smaller procedures and so not overwhelm the readers. In addition, the headings can help the readers to find the specific procedure that they need to find.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should present branching steps clearly.
For example:
1. Determine whether you have the program called Kaza on your hard drive.
 - If you do have Kaza, go on to the next step.
 - If you don't have Kaza, go to <www.Kaza.com> and follow the Instructions for downloading the program.
- From writing my Set of Instructions, I have learned that I should tell what to do in the case of a mistake or unexpected result.
For example:
5. Depress and release the START, RESET, and RUN switches on the operator's panel.
NOTE: If the machine stops immediately and the FAULT light illuminates, reposition the second reel and repeat step 5.

Toller Cranston

Canadian figure-skater Toller Cranston attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he showed great talent as a painter, but failed a class in sculpture. He told his sculpture teacher, Joan Essar, "Look, I'm not really a sculptor. It's not my thing. As a matter of fact, I'm having a painting exhibition in Toronto." Ms. Essar and a couple of other art teachers looked at some of his paintings, which impressed them, then they asked him, "What do you want to be? An art teacher or an artist?" He replied that he wanted to be an artist, and they advised him, "Don't bother finishing school." He didn't.

Appendix A: Some Common Rules of Writing

How Do I Use *Affect* And *Effect*?

The word “effect” is both a noun and a verb. The noun “effect” means “result” and refers to the consequences an action or event has

The **effect** her father’s death had on her was to throw her into a deep depression.

The word “affect” is a verb, meaning “to influence.”

Her father’s death **affected** her by throwing her into a deep depression.

The verb “effect” means “to bring about,” “to accomplish.”

He **effected** his escape with a rope made of strips of his sheet.

- Nineteenth-century cartoonist Bernhard Gillam’s first attempt at oil painting was a dismal failure. When he was eighteen years old, he painted a battle between the Aztec Native Americans and the Spanish explorers. The painting was filled with dead and dying soldiers, but when exhibited at the Brooklyn Academy of Fine Arts as number 93, it did not produce the seriously dramatic **effect** Mr. Gillam wanted. A reviewer in the Brooklyn *Eagle* wrote, “The sensation of the hour is number 93. There was never anything funnier than the dying men in 93, unless it is the men who are already dead. Don’t fail to see it; it’s the greatest show on earth!” Mr. Gillam used to stand near his painting, listening to people laugh at what he had meant to be a deadly serious painting.

- Sometimes the board of education trusts students more than the principal trusts them. In 1974, Priscilla Marco wrote an article for her New York high school newspaper. The article listed instances of censorship of the school newspaper and pointed out that students had not been given copies of a board of education pamphlet describing their rights. However, the principal refused to let her article be printed. Ms. Marco contacted school authorities about the censorship; she also contacted the American Civil Liberties Union. Eventually, the school chancellor ordered that Ms. Marco’s article be published, but even then the school principal refused to allow it to be published. Therefore, the board of education printed a special edition of the student newspaper which contained discussions of the First Amendment and how it **affects** young people, as well as both Ms. Marco’s original article and an updated, revised version. On June 23, 1975, protected by security guards, members of the board of education entered Ms. Marco’s school—the Long Island City High School—and passed out copies of the newspaper.

How Do I Use *Amount* And *Number*?

Use *number* for things you can count.

Ex: I spilled a large **number** of bags of flour on the floor.

Use *amount* for quantities you can't count.

Ex: I spilled a large **amount** of flour on the floor.

- Actor Jack Nicholson is aware that two Jacks exist. Big Jack is the image, a raider of hell complete with sunglasses and smokes and other stimulants. Regular Jack is a lot quieter, especially at age 70. Occasionally, people see Big Jack when Mr. Nicholson wants them to see Regular Jack. This occurs a lot with bartenders. Mr. Nicholson says, "I can't tell you how many bartenders I've had to grab by the lapel and say, 'Look, give me a very big glass with a lot of ice and a small **amount** of bourbon.' They see Big Jack, and they want to give Big Jack that extra shot of bourbon. But you can't be Big Jack all the time."

- Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin, had an older brother named Tom who wanted him and yet another brother, who was named Robert, to keep up their studies after they had started to work for a living. Tom would ask Alexander and Robert to each contribute a coin, then he would quiz them on math, geography, and history. The brother who answered the greatest **number** of questions correctly got both coins.

- Hollywood cameraman James Wong Howe had the greatest **amount** of fun in his career during the days of silent movies. He remembers driving around with a crew looking for a house to shoot in front of. If no one was home, they began to shoot the film. If the homeowner returned before they had finished, everyone would hop over the fence and take off running as if they were in a Keystone Kops comedy.

- Dr. F.P. Keppel, the president of the Carnegie Corporation, which financially supported many libraries, made several visits to the Denver Public Library and the University of Denver Library. He was impressed by the **number** of visitors to the libraries, and once joked to librarian Malcolm Glenn Wyer, "Now tell me, Malcolm, how much has it cost you to hire all these people to keep coming in and out of the library during the days I was here?"

- Tom Hanks, of course, has won back-to-back Oscars for Best Actor for his roles in *Philadelphia* and *Forrest Gump*. This puts him in the ranks of actors who can command millions of dollars for starring in a movie. However, like most other actors, he underwent a period of poverty before making it big. Early in his career as an actor, his sister returned several empty soda-pop containers for the deposit so that she could send him an admittedly small **amount** of money.

How Do I Use Apostrophes to Show Possession?

How do I make singular words possessive?

Answer: Add an apostrophe and an -s.

- Great art is frequently earthy. One of the most famous scenes in Ingmar **Bergman's** *Fanny and Alexander* shows the character Uncle Carl amusing children with his virtuoso farting; his talents include being able to blow out a candle with his wind. Was the actor who played Uncle Carl really farting? Unfortunately, no. Bertil Guve, who played the boy Alexander, explains, "They had a person sitting right next to the candle with a tube." Watch the scene carefully. When the candle is blown out, the wind does not come from Uncle **Carl's** backside.

- Sir Laurence Olivier paid attention to the little things in his effort to make his wonderful acting even better. For example, when he was going to play Dr. Astrov in **Chekhov's** *Uncle Vanya*, he was extremely happy when he acquired an authentic pair of 19th-century pince-nez to wear when he played the role. He explained, "No one else might know it is real, but the fact that it is adds authority to my feeling about the role."

How do I make plural words possessive?

Answer, part 1: If the word does not end in -s, add an apostrophe and -s.

- Children do strange things sometimes. When he was a child, Will Hobbs, author of such young **people's** novels as *Beardance*, bought a ticket to a movie, and then he stood in line. When the doors opened, the line moved forward, but when young Will reached the ticket-taker, he discovered that he had been chewing on his ticket, turning it into a spitball.

Answer, part 2: If the word does end in -s, add an apostrophe only.

- Charles Laughton directed the movie *The Night of the Hunter*, in which an insane preacher played by Robert Mitchum chases a small boy named John, played by Billy Chapin, to get him to reveal where some money is hidden. After the film had been released, Mr. Laughton heard Mr. Mitchum ask Billy, "Do you think John's frightened of the preacher?" Billy replied that John wasn't, so Mr. Mitchum said, "Then you don't know the preacher, and you don't know John." Billy, who was somewhat cocky, said, "Oh, really? That's probably why I just won the New York **Critics'** Circle Prize." Mr. Laughton, hearing this, roared, "Get that child away from me!"

Use Brackets for Editorial Insertions

Occasionally, you may need to add words to a quotation to make the quotation more understandable to the reader (or to correct an error in the quotation). When you do that, enclose your words in brackets to show that the added words (or letters) are your own and not those of the speaker.

- If you are really famous, it's hard to avoid the paparazzi. For a while, celebrity photographers were after all the photographs of Jennifer Aniston, Brad Pitt, and Angelina Jolie that they could get. (Actually, they still are.) And for a while, Ms. Aniston wore the same outfit over and over, hoping that media editors would think that newly taken photographs were actually old, leftover photographs. According to celebrity photographer Gary Sun, that trick will no longer work. He says that these days the media will “use the pictures, **[and]** they'll talk smack about you for wearing the same clothes over and over.”

- If you want people to laugh, it helps if they know that you are a comedian. For example, Groucho Marx went to a candy store and bought some candy for his children. The candy store owner did not recognize him and did not laugh when Groucho said he wanted to buy “just a few dainties to make the kiddies sick.” However, later the candy store owner learned that Groucho was a famous comedian and so when Groucho entered the store again and said, “The kiddies want to get sick again,” the candy store owner laughed hard. Groucho says, “Surely this wasn't a funny remark. Certainly it wasn't any more amusing than when I had said a similar thing before. But the fact that **[the candy store owner knew that]** I was a comedian made a difference.”

- Controversial film director John Waters, aka the Prince of Puke, finds inspiration for his films in real life. In a Baltimore bar, he once asked a man what he did for a living. The man replied, “Can I be frank? I trade deer meat for crack.” Mr. Waters reflects, “I can't think that up. I could think of three movies about him. I mean, does he wait at a deer crossing sign and gun it when he need[s] a fix? It takes a while to get deer meat so you have to plan ahead, which isn't what most junkies do. Little things like that, anything can inspire me. I base everything on regular people who think they're completely normal and their behavior seems entirely insane to me.”

- Being an actor can be an insecure experience, as actors frequently worry about whether they will ever find another acting job. Alan Arkin tells a story about the great actor George C. Scott. One month after Mr. Scott had won an Oscar for Best Actor for his title role in *Patton*, a good friend of his visited him and heard him yelling. He was yelling for joy, screaming, “I got a job! I got a job!” Mr. Arkin makes the important point, “So most **[actors]** never get over that sense of never working again. It's a precarious life.” Of course, Mr. Arkin tries to get quality jobs, although compromise can be a necessity: “I just want good material. But part of taking a role is your bank account. If you haven't worked in six months and the cupboard is bare, then your sights get lowered a bit out of necessity.”

Capitalize the Names of Holidays

- While creating *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, director Steven Spielberg worked with young children, including a six-year-old Drew Barrymore, and so he wanted to make the filming fun. On **Halloween**, he went to work dressed up in costume—as a woman. Drew remembers, “He looked great!” He was also filmed in costume, and he said to the camera, “This is **Halloween**, folks. I don’t dress this way *all* the time.”
- In 1939, May Wale Brown left Austria to come to New York City to be with her two brothers. She arrived on **Thanksgiving**, and of course the big Macy’s **Thanksgiving** Parade was being held. Her brothers, who loved to tease her, told her that they had arranged the parade in order to welcome her to America. (Later, Ms. Brown became a Hollywood script supervisor.)
- When Beth Quinn, former columnist for New York’s *Times Herald-Record*, was young, she and her sister looked forward to two big presents—one for each of them—each **Christmas**. The two big presents came in two big boxes, the tops of which were wrapped in colorful paper. One box’s top was red; the other box’s top was blue. To open the box and see the present, all a child had to do was to take the top off of a box. When Beth was about eight years old and wondering if Santa Claus was real, she came across these two boxes in her family’s storage area. To Beth, this was disturbing evidence that perhaps Santa Claus was not real, so she asked her father about the boxes: “Why are they here? Why doesn’t Santa have them?” Her father explained the situation well: “What are you, nuts or something? You think Santa can haul everything around with him? He asked your mother and me years ago to keep those boxes here. He said to put them out on **Christmas Eve** so he can fill them.” This made sense to Beth, who realized, “So that’s why the lids come off like that! So he can fill them and doesn’t have to wrap them each time!” Her father agreed: “He’s a smart guy, that Santa.”
- Eric Sean Nall is the frontman for the music group Foxy Shazam, who recorded the album *Introducing*. One of the songs on the album, “A Black Man’s Breakfast,” is about Karen, Mr. Nall’s girlfriend, a Proctor and Gamble scientist who develops shampoos. When the album came out, Mr. Nall’s girlfriend wrote down the lyrics for most of the songs so they could appear in the CD booklet, but when Mr. Nall took the lyrics to a printer, he added a couple of lines to “A Black Man’s Breakfast”: “Karen, I love you so much. Will you marry me?” He gave her a copy of the CD and booklet on **Christmas Eve**, and when she read the lyrics, she cried—and she said yes.
- Madeleine L’Engle, author of *A Wrinkle in Time*, was a good mother, but not necessarily a good baker. When her children asked her to bake a cake for a school bake sale, she did, but the cake was lopsided. Therefore, she sent a note to the school, asking, “Is there anything else I could do, more in line with my talents? Is there a play we could help with, or anything like that?” The following week, she and her husband, a professional actor, found themselves in charge of directing the school’s **Christmas** pageant.

Use a Colon Between Two Independent Clauses When the Second Clause Summarizes or Explains the First

- Shirley Temple became a child star in movies before she learned how to read. So how did she learn her lines? Her mother read her the scripts of her movies at bedtime. In 1934, little Shirley won a miniature Oscar to recognize a major **accomplishment**: **According** to Hollywood, she had brought “more happiness to millions of children and millions of grownups than any child of her years in the history of the world.”

- The parents of Sandra Bullock, star of *Speed*, loved opera. Her mother sang, and her father taught voice. When Sandra was eight years old, she made her debut on the operatic **stage**: **She** played a gypsy child. The part was non-singing and non-speaking, but richly rewarding—members of the audience threw chocolates to her.

- A fun movie about drag queens is the Australian film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Directed by Stephan Elliott, the surprise international hit even won an Academy Award for Costume Design. This win is **amazing**: **The** showpiece costume of the film—the flip-flop dress—was made for only \$7, thus showing the superiority of originality over money. (When the film’s costume designer, Lizzy Gardiner, picked up her Oscar, she wore a dress made from credit cards.) Of course, the male stars of the film wore dresses for the movie, but for the crew photo taken after the film was completed, every member of the crew, including some very macho males, happily wore a dress.

- Not every family is happy. While growing up, actor Corbin Bernsen did not have a really good relationship with his father, and at one point, during the process of getting a divorce, his mother was drinking way too much. In addition, Corbin was going through a process of teenage rebellion and blaming his parents for it. Corbin says, “I was a typical kid, getting high and acting crazy. And I said, ‘Well, Mom is this’ and ‘I do this because of that’ and ‘What do you expect?’” His father then taught him an important lesson. Corbin remembers, “My dad said, ‘You have a choice in life. You can be happy or you can be sad. But don’t blame anybody else other than yourself. If your life is going to be screwed up, don’t blame me or your mom.’” He decided to become an actor after seeing his mother on the stage in a production of *The Miracle Worker*, following which he thought, “Wow, that’s my mother up there, the crazy woman who makes my dinner. Look at what she’s doing!” She also taught him an important **lesson**: “**She** said, ‘I don’t mind you following what I’m doing. You’ve seen the ups and downs. The only thing I demand of you is that you love and respect your craft. It doesn’t matter if you’re doing a commercial or a movie, just love it. Love all of it.’”

- In 1965, the Friars Club, whose members are comedians, roasted Soupy Sales with comic insults. Mr. Sales and everybody else enjoyed themselves, but Friars Club member Brian Dougherty ran into a **problem**: **He** had to go to the bathroom, but he didn’t want to miss any of the jokes. Fortunately, Mr. Dougherty is a problem-solver. He whispered to Marty Allen, who was sitting next to him at a table with an overhanging tablecloth, “Hand me that pitcher.” With a relieved bladder, Mr. Dougherty was able to laugh even harder.

After an Independent Clause, Use a Colon to Direct Attention to a Quotation

- This may be a shock to some people, but at one time, two-time Oscar-winner Jody Foster thought about giving up acting. She found acting not to be rewarding anymore, and she thought about entering some other profession where she could use her analytical skills. Ms. Foster says, “I had been feeling there was something kind of not intellectually valuable about being an actor. It had started to seem like a really dumb job.” Fortunately, she realized what the problem was: **“It was me. It was my fault. I wasn’t bringing enough to it. I hadn’t realized that it was my responsibility to go deeper, to really build a character from the ground up; that to really be a good actor, you had to be able to discuss a movie, any movie that you’re taking on, and to see the literature in it. Then it becomes fascinating. Then you get better as an actor. Then you learn to really love movies.”** With this realization, Ms. Foster rededicated herself to her career—at age 12. This paid off in a big way. Just two years later, when she was 14, she played a prostitute in *Taxi Driver*, earning an Oscar nomination.

- Too often, Hollywood has stereotyped actors and actresses, sometimes because of their ethnicity. Anna May Wong played many, many Oriental stereotypes in the 1930s, something she disliked. So, of course, did other actors and actresses with Oriental features (or makeup that made them appear Oriental). Once, Ms. Wong said, “Why is it that the screen Chinese is nearly always the villain? And so crude a villain. Murderous, treacherous, a snake in the grass. We are not like that. How should we be, with a civilization that is so many times older than that of the west?” In 1960, after appearing seldom in movies for two decades, she played Lana Turner’s housekeeper in *Portrait in Black*. Again, the stereotypes came out, this time from the publicity department, which explained Ms. Wong’s long absence from the screen by passing along a proverb that supposedly had been taught to Ms. Wong by her mother, “Don’t be photographed too much or you’ll lose your soul.” Ms. Wong’s own explanation was **this: “I was so tired of the parts I had to play.”**

- When he was four years old, actor Steve Buscemi was hit by a bus and got his skull fractured. This doesn’t mean that he was unlucky—the accident could have been a lot worse. In addition, when he became 18 years old, he received a \$6,000 settlement from the city. He used the money to pay for acting school at the Lee Strasberg Institute, where he studied with John, Lee’s son, who was more laid-back than his famous father. For example, Mr. Buscemi describes an acting scenario at the **institute: “They had this thing where if you were in a desert and imagining sun beating down on you, you couldn’t use the stage light to imagine the sun. But John said if the stage light works, that’s fine. The audience don’t know and don’t care.”** Mr. Buscemi, of course, gets results, as is evidenced by his roles in such movies as *Fargo*, *Reservoir Dogs*, and *Ghost World*.

- People do make mistakes. While Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., author of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, was on a panel at City College, a woman asked him this **question: “Why did you put exactly one hundred ‘So it goes’s’ in *Slaughterhouse-Five*?”** Mr. Vonnegut replied that he was not aware that he had used that exact number. Also on the panel was critic John Simon, who disappeared while everyone had coffee, and then reappeared and said to Mr. Vonnegut, “One hundred and three.”

Use a Colon to Direct Attention to an Appositive

An appositive renames something.

- Jeff Bridges had a good reason for wanting to star in the 1976 remake of *King Kong*: “I used to pretend I was sick whenever I saw [in] the *TV Guide* [that] *King Kong* was going to be on, so I could stay home from school and watch the original.” Mr. Bridges, however, is critical of the performance of one of his co-stars in the remake. He says, “The monkey in that was just terrible. Oh, my God. Just terrible.” Mr. Bridges has also seen **another movie** numerous times: *The Big Lebowski*, a cult favorite in which he plays The Dude. He says, “Normally when a movie of mine comes on I’ll turn the channel, but when *Lebowski* comes on, I’ll say, ‘I’ll just wait until Turturro licks the [bowling] ball, then I’ll change the channel.’” But after Turturro licks the bowling ball, Mr. Bridges will say that he’ll wait until another key moment in the movie occurs, and then he’ll turn the channel. This keeps repeating itself until Mr. Bridges discovers that he has watched *The Big Lebowski* yet another time.

- According to Brad Pitt, his children are “the funniest people I’ve ever met.” For example, in 2008 his daughter Shiloh went through a phase where she wanted to be called by **another name: John or Peter**. Mr. Pitt calls it “a Peter Pan thing” where whenever he starts to call her by her real name she responds, “I’m John.” Of course, Mr. Pitt is right when he says that this stuff is “cute to parents” and he is wrong when he says that this stuff is “probably really obnoxious to other people.” It’s actually pretty cute to other people.

- Adrienne Janic, host of the car show *Overhaulin’* on TLC, attended the 2008 **Christian Oscars: the Movieguide awards**. She wore a dress with slits up the sides, and when she sat down, she used two napkins so that she would have enough material to cover up the top of the slits. Even so, one of the Christians present warned her about the evils of wearing such a dress. Ms. Janic replied, “Oh, I’ve got a mansion in hell.”

- Arnold Schwarzenegger has exhibited a lot of drive in his life. One person who taught him to accomplish much was Franz Steeger, a boy in Arnold’s village who held **the record for chinning himself on a tree limb: 21 chin-ups**. The 14-year-old Arnold tried chinning himself, and he did 18 chin-ups, but Franz told him, “You do the rest with your mind.” Franz gave him a pep talk, and Arnold tried again. He did 18 chin-ups, then he did a difficult 19th chin-up, and then Franz reminded him, “You do the rest with your mind.” Arnold kept going, and he broke the record with 22 chin-ups.

- Satirist Al Franken regularly made fun of disgraced President Richard Nixon, but when he produced a *Saturday Night Live* “Presidential Bash” in 1992, he sent a letter to Mr. Nixon, hoping that he would make a personal appearance on the show. Unfortunately, as a reply, he received a letter saying no. No problem. Mr. Franklin happily framed the letter and now proudly displays it in **a room that he has devoted to his collection of Nixon memorabilia: a bathroom**.

Use a Colon to Direct Attention to a List

- While Michael Kidd was choreographing the movie *Guys and Dolls*, Samuel Goldwyn wanted to take him out for a meal, so he asked him if he liked Jewish food. Mr. Kidd did, so Mr. Goldwyn took him to Lindy's, raving on the way about Lindy's delicious **Jewish food: gefilte fish, kishke, kneidlach, kugel, lockshen, and so on**. Arriving at Lindy's, Mr. Goldwyn asked the waiter what the special was. The waiter replied, "Irish stew," and Mr. Goldwyn said, "That's what we'll have."

- Ernie Banks was the first African-American athlete to play for the Chicago Cubs, and he worried about how the veteran Cubs would treat an African-American rookie. He needn't have worried. When he walked into the Cubs for the first time, **three players were there: home-run hitter Hank Sauer and infielders Randy Jackson and Bill Serena**. All three players shook Mr. Banks' hand and welcomed him to the Cubs. The same thing happened when he met home-run hitter Ralph Kiner. During batting practice, Mr. Banks had no bats of his own, so he asked Mr. Kiner if he could use one of his bats. Mr. Kiner had no objections. Mr. Banks hit the first pitch thrown to him into the left-field bleachers, and the Cubs were silent for a moment, then Mr. Kiner yelled to Mr. Banks, "Hey, Banks! You can use all my bats if you promise to keep on hitting like that!"

- In the winter of 1995, the weather was so cold that over four inches of ice formed on a small lake in Indiana, making it safe to walk on. However, a few warm days in February melted some of the ice, making it dangerous to walk on. Unfortunately, 12-year-old Josh Mitchell didn't realize that, and he decided to take a short cut to a friend's house by walking across the semi-frozen lake. He fell through the ice, and a dog named Levi, the pet of Denise and George Hammond, saw him and started whining. George heard the whining, investigated, and saw Josh floundering in the icy water. He ordered, "Levi, fetch!" Levi ran out onto the lake, jumped into the water, and allowed Josh to hold on to him. Meanwhile, George and Denise brought Levi's 20-foot leash out to the lake and tried to throw it to Josh, but the leash was too short. Because she didn't know how long Levi could keep Josh afloat, Denise went out on the ice, knowing that although she weighed less than her husband, she would probably fall through the ice. In fact, she did fall through the ice four feet away from Josh. She kept breaking the ice until she could reach Josh, then she kept him afloat. George called Levi, and Levi came out of the water. Two neighbors brought an extension ladder out to the lake and pushed it to where Denise and Josh were. Denise pushed Josh up on the ladder and then climbed up on the ladder herself. The ladder distributed their weight across a large area of the ice so that they didn't fall through, and they reached the shore. Denise fainted when she reached the shore, but paramedics took care of her and Josh and took them to the hospital, where they quickly recovered from their ordeal. Of course, Josh and his parents were grateful to Levi and the Hammonds, and they sent them **gifts: bones for Levi, a big bouquet of flowers for Denise, and a gift certificate to be used at a pet store**.

How Do I Recognize and Correct Comma Splices?

A comma splice consists of two independent clauses that are connected with a comma only.

Ex: Sally went to the movies, Bill went to the dance.

Ex: Bottom is a fool, Puck is a trickster.

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

You may correct a sentence with a comma splice in several ways:

1. Make two sentences out of it.

Sally went to the movies. Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool. Puck is a trickster.

2. Keep the comma, but join the sentences together with a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Sally went to the movies, but Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool, and Puck is a trickster.

3. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon.

Sally went to the movies; Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool; Puck is a trickster.

4. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon, a transition word such as *however* or *moreover*, and a comma.

Sally went to the movies; however, Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool; however, Puck is a trickster.

5. Make one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause.

Although Sally went to the movies, Bill went to the dance.

Although Bottom is a fool, Puck is a trickster.

6. If appropriate, use a dash.

Sally went to the movies—Bill went to the dance.

Bottom is a fool—Puck is a trickster.

The way that you correct a run-on sentence will depend on the context of the sentence.

Use Commas to Separate the Items in a Series of Three or More

Use commas to separate the items in a series of three or more.

Ex: I like Sarah Silverstone, Lenny Bruce, and Richard Pryor.

Do not use a comma to separate the items in a series of two.

Ex: I like Laurel and Hardy.

Note: This is a series of three clauses: 1) started out studying law, 2) switched to serious acting, and 3) finally started performing comic roles.

- When comedian Steve Allen was a teenager, he ran away from home. Very quickly, he began **to steal, to beg, and to eat garbage**. Mr. Allen writes about finding a discarded can of pork and beans along a road. The can contained several ants and a few beans, but Mr. Allen shook the ants out of the can and enjoyed eating what was left of the beans.

- Rick Aviles, the actor whose character killed Patrick Swayze's character in *Ghost*, once made his living as a street comedian in New York—after he passed the hat he would find **American money, francs, yen, and marks**.

- Ridley Scott has directed many different kinds of films including *Alien, American Gangster, Blade Runner, Gladiator, Hannibal, Matchstick Men, and Thelma and Louise*. As you would expect, he watches many, many films. At 11 p.m. he starts watching a movie, and he says that “if I'm still watching at 1, that means it's a good film.”

- Werner Herzog, the director of *Fitzcarraldo, The Enigma of Caspar Hauser, and Aguirre, the Wrath of God*, has advice on how to become a successful filmmaker: “Work as a bouncer in a sex club, work as a taxi driver, work as a butcher—earn the money and make your own film.” Perhaps his most important advice is to make a film instead of making excuses for why you can't make a film. He says, “Today, with these little digital cameras, there is no excuse any more.” Mr. Herzog himself stole his first camera and used it to make 11 films. He says about the camera, “It fulfilled its real destiny.”

- When Groucho Marx, star of such movies as *Horsefeathers* with his famous brothers, was a young man in vaudeville, he once worked at an Atlantic City theater whose manager also ran a boarding house on the waterfront where entertainers stayed. This manager was a man who knew how to save a dollar. Every meal featured fish because outside Groucho's window, the theater manager kept a huge fishing net into which Groucho's **breakfast, lunch, and dinner** swam. Perhaps unnecessarily, Groucho says that after his engagement at the Atlantic City theater was over, for an entire week he ate nothing but roast beef.

Use a Comma or Commas to Set Off Direct Address

Use a comma or commas to set off direct address. Direct address occurs when someone is addressed directly by name or a name. For example:

“Hi, David.”

“Hello, Dad.”

“What’s happening, man?”

“Hello, Mr. Jones.”

“This concerns you, Mr. Jones, because of the cost of shutting down the plant.”

- Actor John Hurt co-starred with Harrison Ford in the 2008 action-adventure movie *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. The 66-year-old Mr. Ford has kept himself in shape, and he did his own fights and many of his character’s stunts in the movie. At one point, after performing a harrowing stunt, Mr. Ford turned to Mr. Hurt and joked, “Well, you don’t think they employ me to act, did you, **John**?”

- John Cho and Kal Penn are the Korean and Indian stars of the 2004 cult movie *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*, but they have done much more acting than that film and its sequel. Mr. Cho played Sulu in a *Star Trek* movie and appeared as a hip-hop-savvy accountant named Kenny in TV’s *Ugly Betty*. Mr. Penn appeared on TV’s *House* and landed a role in the dramatic movie *The Namesake* in part because of *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*. He explains that *Namesake* director Mira Nair let him audition because “her 14-year-old son, who was a *Harold & Kumar* fan, [...] every night before bed said, ‘**Mom**, please audition Kal Penn for the part.’”

- The brother of journalist Donald Liebenson once saw actor Paul Newman at an airport and asked him for an autograph for his mother, who was a big fan. Mr. Newman replied, “Sorry, **pal**. Tell your mom that I don’t sign autographs, but I’d be happy to buy her a beer.” Years later, Mr. Liebenson saw Mr. Newman at a publicity junket and recounted that story to him. Mr. Newman replied that he could remember the exact moment that he began declining to sign autographs: “I was standing at a urinal in Sardi’s, and this guy came though the door with a piece of paper. I thought this was inappropriate. It wasn’t just an invasion of privacy. It was an invasion of purpose.”

- TV commercials for the European jeans manufactured by Diesel sometimes addressed contemporary issues. One commercial was headlined, “How to smoke 145 cigarettes a day.” In it, a talking skull asks the viewers, “**Man**, who needs two lungs anyway?”

- Jack Riley played the character of the insulting, misanthropic Mr. Elliott Carlin on *The Bob Newhart Show*. Frequently, fans of the show ask him if he is anything like the character he portrayed. Because he is a professional comedian, Mr. Riley’s standard response to this question is in the character of Mr. Carlin: “**Bite me, you wiener.**”

After an Introductory Element, Use a Comma

After an introductory element, use a comma.

Note: For short introductory elements, commas may be optional.

- **Frequently**, silence in the wilderness, whether on land or sea, is a sign of danger. Gary Paulsen, author of *Hatchet*, knows a man who survived an attack by a great white shark while he was diving. **Immediately before the attack**, the ocean grew silent. **Today**, the man says, “I should have listened to the silence. I’d still have my right leg.”

- **One day in 2010**, <Lulu.com>, a Web site that allows authors to self-publish their own books in various print and electronic formats, announced a new way of publishing one’s work: “We recognize electronic books and the internet are a passing fad, so we are now offering the tried and true hand-written scroll.” **Of course**, this announcement was made on April Fools Day.

- Comedian Chris Rock has made it big in the risky and difficult business of show business, but that doesn’t mean that he wants his relatives to try to accomplish what he has accomplished. **Whenever a family member wants help in getting established in show business**, he offers to pay their college tuition instead.

- **As a young comedian**, Jim Carrey made out a \$10 million check to himself “for acting services rendered,” and carried it around in his wallet as a physical symbol of an important goal. **Later**, he received \$10 million for starring in *The Mask 2*—and \$20 million for starring in *Liar, Liar*. **Along the way to mega-success**, he achieved success as an actor in the TV comedy series *In Living Color*. **Unfortunately**, his fame did have a downside when he took his daughter out for trick-or-treating on Halloween. **Perhaps exaggerating a little**, Mr. Carrey says that people would say, “It’s the dude from *In Living Color*! Here’s an extra candy! Do something [funny]!”

- **When Adam Sandler was a little boy**, he had a Diver Dan doll. **Unfortunately**, he lost it. **Fortunately**, he had a father who cared about him and didn’t want him to be unhappy. His father dressed up as Diver Dan’s father, then told young Adam that Diver Dan was not lost but with him, and he thanked young Adam for taking care of Diver Dan. **Today**, Mr. Sandler says, “Dad would do anything to make me feel better.”

- Martial arts master Bruce Lee used visualization to get rid of negative thoughts. He would imagine himself writing down the negative thought on a piece of paper. Then he would imagine himself wadding up the piece of paper and setting fire to it. **After the piece of paper had burned**, the negative thought would no longer enter his mind.

- **When 10-year-old Alicia Marks was dancing on Dec. 27, 1920**, in South London, a young student was so overwhelmed by her performance that he spent the last of his allowance on some white chrysanthemums to give to her. The young student was Patrick Dolin, who later partnered Ms. Marks when they were using the names of Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin.

Use a Comma and a Conjunction to Separate Two Independent Clauses

Note: An independent clause is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

Note: The comma goes before the conjunction (the connecting word).

Ex: I like this, and she likes that.

- Fayard Nicholas of the dance team the Nicholas Brothers loved vaudeville and hung out in the theaters, watching all the acts and learning from them. When he was 11 years old, he decided to become an entertainer, **so** he created an act for himself and his brother and sister. They stayed up late rehearsing the act, **and** when their parents reminded them that it was a school night, Bayard told them, “We have something to show you.” Their parents watched the act, **and** then they looked at each other and said, “Hey, we have something here.” Their father had them audition for the manager of the Philadelphia’s Standard Theater, who quickly told him, “They’re booked for next week.” The Nicholas Brothers became a famous dance team in movies.

- After making the movie *Get Smart*, Steve Carell, who plays Maxwell Smart, knew that his seven-year-old daughter and some of her friends wanted to see it. However, he warned her that seeing the movie might be embarrassing for her: “I had to prepare her for a scene where you see me with my trousers off. I said, ‘You’re going to go see this with your friends, **and** you’re going to see my naked butt. Are you going to get embarrassed? Because you don’t have to go.’” His daughter asked, “Is it funny?” Mr. Carell replied, “I think so.” And she made her decision: “Well, okay then.” Her decision made Mr. Carell, who values funny highly, happy.

- Mitzi Green was a child star at Paramount, **and** she became friends with Maxine Marx, the daughter of comedian Chico Marx. During a stay-over at Maxine’s house, Mitzi put a cream on her face. Maxine asked what the cream was, **and** Mitzi replied, “It’s a freckle remover.” “Does it work?” “It hasn’t yet, **but** I keep hoping.”

- We think of Paul Muni as a serious actor who undertook serious roles, winning an Oscar as Best Actor for playing the lead role in *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, **but** he was also a master of the put-on. He was born in what is now the Ukraine, **and** when he was in his 30s, he became an American citizen by passing a test that asked questions about American history and politics. At the beginning of the test, he spoke with a heavy accent and looked puzzled by the questions he was being asked, but as the test continued he lost his accent and boldly answered the questions. When he answered the final question, he spoke with no accent at all, **and** then he told his examiner, “Your honor, it’s remarkable. Now that you’ve made me a citizen, I can speak perfectly!”

- Olga Preobrajenska was a very strong ballerina and teacher of ballet. As an old lady, she lived in a nursing home, **but** whenever she was fed up with the nurses, she stacked all the bedroom furniture against the door so that they couldn’t come in and bother her.

Use a Comma or Commas to Set Off Parenthetical Elements

Set off parenthetical elements with commas.

She, however, is not afraid of them.

She, on the other hand, is not afraid of them.

We see, though, that she is small.

- As a very young actress, Eliza Dushku worked with Arnold Schwarzenegger in the movie *True Lies*. She had never really planned to act, and her mother was not even close to being a stage mother, so they were learning what to do little by little, and lots of people were giving them lots of advice, including this: “Your kid has a funny name, Judy—you should think about changing it.” Mr. Schwarzenegger, **however**, said, “Eliza, Judy, trust me, keep her name, people will learn it, take it from me.”

- Script supervisor May Wale Brown was very impressed by the professionalism shown by Henry Fonda in the making of *Gideon’s Trumpet*, which was a Hallmark Hall of Fame TV movie. In the movie, Mr. Fonda used a pair of wire-rimmed glasses in his portrayal of the character he was playing. His own real glasses had heavy rims because they contained a hearing aid that he needed due to his old age. In a scene with Fay Wray, the camera focused on Ms. Wray, and Mr. Fonda was not, **of course**, in her close-ups. However, Mr. Fonda said his lines well, and he continued to wear the wire-rimmed glasses. When Ms. Brown told him that he could wear his own glasses (she did not want to mention the hearing aid), Mr. Fonda replied, “I want Fay to see the Gideon character when she looks at me. It’ll make it easier for her.”

- In 1981, Karen Allen played the only “girl” whom Indiana Jones ever loved in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and in 2008 her character met the hero again in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Of course, she was a couple of decades older, and filming took a little adjustment, although she “dove right back in, driving these big dusty, clanking old trucks on these remote locations, just like old times!” Still, Ms. Allen says, “In the beginning, I was saying, ‘Oh, I don’t need the knee pads. Nooo, I don’t need elbow pads!’ After a few days, **though**, you’re like, ‘If I put a double set on the knees, will the camera see them through my pants?’ All that flinging yourself around is the hard part.”

- Some superstars enjoy fame. When silent-movie greats Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford got married, they went to Europe for their honeymoon, where they were at first astonished by the mobs of people who recognized them. Therefore, they slipped away to Germany, where they were not nearly so well known. After a while, **though**, they decided to go back to where they had been mobbed. Ms. Pickford said to her new husband, “Let’s go someplace where we are known. I’ve had enough obscurity for a lifetime.”

Use Commas or Other Punctuation to Set Off Speaker Tags

Set off speaker tags with a comma or other punctuation.

Speaker tags are short phrases such as “he said” or “she replied” or “David yelled” or “Sally asked.”

Bill asked, “How are you?”
Sally replied, “I am well.”

Note: These sentences are also correct.

“How are you?” Bill asked.
“What time is it?” the stranger asked.
“Help!” he shouted.

- When friends Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon made the movie *Buddy, Buddy*, Mr. Matthau took a bad spill on the set. Worried, Mr. Lemmon folded his jacket and tenderly put it under Mr. Matthau’s head, then **asked**, “Are you comfortable?” Mr. Matthau **replied**, “I make a living.”

- When Fay Kanin started writing for the movies, she told her boss, Sam Marx, the story editor at MGM, “Mr. Marx, I know you own *Gone with the Wind*. I’ve read it, and I would be a wonderful writer for it.” He smiled at her brashness and **said**, “I think they have in mind a more expensive writer for it.” Ms. Kanin always appreciated that he used the word “expensive” instead of the word “talented.”

- While studying at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, Keith Haring used to create art on long lengths of paper—the paper was so long that he rolled it out the door and onto the city sidewalk. Passersby used to talk to him about his art. Mr. Haring later **said**, “Most of them weren’t the type to go to art galleries, but a lot of their comments struck me as more perceptive than those of my teachers and fellow students.” In 1990, Mr. Haring died of AIDS.

- While Andre Previn was married to Mia Farrow, he belonged to the Garrick Club. One day, the club secretary invited him to bring Mia to dinner there, but **added**, “By the way, you must forgive me for this, but she can’t use the main staircase. The women have to go round the back.” This shocked Mr. Previn, and when he told his wife about the invitation—and about women not being allowed to use the main staircase—she **replied**, “You have 10 minutes in which to quit the club.” Fortunately, he had the perfect reply: “I’ve already done it.” Years later, Mr. Previn **said**, “Unbelievable. Mia was the wrong person to try that on.”

How Do I Recognize and Correct Dangling Modifiers?

“To spot a dangling modifier, look for a sentence that begins with a modifier but doesn’t name the person, idea, or thing modified. Readers will think the modifier refers to the subject of the sentence that follows. If it doesn’t, the modifier dangles.”—*The Longman Pocket Writer’s Companion*

Example No. 1

The following sentence says that the Courthouse was walking down Court Street):

Walking down Court Street, the Courthouse glittered in the sun.

The clause “Walking down Court Street” modifies what follows it: “the Courthouse.” Clearly, this is wrong—the Courthouse was not walking down Court street.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who was walking down the street.

Walking down Court Street, I saw the Courthouse glittering in the sun.

Example No. 2

In the following sentence, the writer is saying that he or she is “a Fortune 200 company and the world’s largest producer of automotive and industrial coatings.”

Being a Fortune 200 company and the world’s largest producer of automotive and industrial coatings, I would assume challenging assignments to provide exposure to various career options.

The clause “Being a Fortune 200 company and the world’s largest producer of automotive and industrial coatings” modifies what follows it: “I.” Clearly, this is wrong—the writer is not a Fortune 200 company and the world’s largest producer of automotive and industrial coatings.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to accurately identify the “Fortune 200 company and the world’s largest producer of automotive and industrial coatings.”

A Fortune 200 company and the world’s largest producer of automotive and industrial coatings, PPG Industries allows interns to assume challenging assignments to provide exposure to various career options.

Example No. 3

In the following sentence, the writer says that “the majority of our curriculum” is “an engineering student at Ohio University.”

As an engineering student at Ohio University, the majority of our curriculum is centered on three important areas in engineering: development, drafting, and design.

The clause “As an engineering student at Ohio University” modifies what follows it: “the majority of our curriculum.” Clearly, this is wrong—the engineering student at Ohio University is not the majority of our curriculum.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to make clear that “an engineering student at Ohio University” describes him or her and not “the majority of our curriculum.”

As an engineering student at Ohio University, I study in particular three important areas in engineering: development, drafting, and design.

Example #4

The following sentence says that the readers will be writing the Instructions:

Dangling Modifier: By writing my Instructions, the readers will understand the importance of following safety procedures in the laboratory.

Note: The phrase “By writing my Instructions “ modifies what follows it; in this case, it modifies “the readers,” which is incorrect.

To get rid of the dangling modifier, the writer needs to identify who is writing the Instructions.

Correct: By writing my Instructions, I will help the readers to understand the importance of following safety procedures in the laboratory.

Note: The phrase “By writing my Instructions” modifies what follows it; in this case, it modifies “I,” which is correct.

More Examples

Dangling Modifier (this sentence doesn’t identify what is lacking accurate, up-to-date information):
By not having accurate, up-to-date information for the cadets, problems continually arise.

Correct Sentence:

Because the manual does not have accurate, up-to-date information for the cadets, problems continually arise.

Dangling Modifier (this sentence says that the dogs will write a manual):
By writing the manual, dogs will be taken care of properly.

Correct Sentence:

By writing the manual, I will make available to pet owners information about how to take care of dogs properly.

Use a Dash or Dashes for an Abrupt Break in the Flow of a Sentence or Dialogue

Dashes are also used for emphasis.

- In a 2002 interview for *Esquire*, Cameron Diaz spoke about a notable practical joke that she played on unsuspecting guests at her home. She has a device that emits fart noises, and whenever a guest sits on a certain cushion located directly over the device, she uses a remote control to activate the device. Ms. Diaz says, “It’s the best. It’s like drugs. The first time you do it to somebody who’s not expecting it—**man, it’s just the greatest high!**” Unfortunately, the joke does have a drawback: “But you can never get away with it twice, so you have to move on to the next person.”

- In New York City, comedian Bob Smith worked as a cater-waiter for a woman who introduced her dogs to him by saying, “This is Picasso, and this is Gorky—*the painter, not the writer.*”

- Being a gorilla imitator can be a harrowing occupation, as during the filming of the Marx Brothers’ *A Day at the Circus* an actor portraying the gorilla fainted twice because the owner of the gorilla skin refused to allow ventilation holes to be pierced in it because it was so valuable. However, one day the owner of the gorilla skin noticed something strange—**the actor had been inside the gorilla skin for three hours and hadn’t fainted yet (normally, anyone wearing the gorilla skin fainted after two hours)**. Investigating, he discovered that the actor had taken an icepick and made several unauthorized ventilation holes in the skin.

- What are the anti-aging secrets of top movie stars? How is an aging movie star able to act credibly in an action movie? Of course, diet and exercise help, although tricks can help, too. For example, wrinkles in close-ups can be eliminated through technology after the film has been shot. In addition, hemorrhoid cream can work well for short periods of time, according to award-winning make-up artist Daniel Phillips. An aging star can put hemorrhoid cream on the bags under his eyes, and for a couple of hours the skin will tighten—**long enough to shoot some close-ups.**

- When Ingrid Bergman arrived in Hollywood her first time, she sent fellow Swedish actress **Greta Garbo—who desired privacy—some flowers** and an invitation to have dinner and spend time together. Ms. Garbo accepted the invitation by telegram—**three months later, when Ms. Bergman was leaving Hollywood.** Ms. Bergman told George Cukor about Ms. Garbo’s odd behavior. Mr. Cukor was friendly with Ms. Garbo, and he told Ms. Bergman, “Of course, Greta wouldn’t have sent the telegram unless she was sure you were leaving.”

Use Adjective-Forming Hyphens When Combining Two or More Words to Form an Adjective That Appears Before the Word It Modifies

When you combine two or more words to form an adjective that appears before the noun it modifies, use hyphens to connect the **adjective-forming** words together.

- **First-time filmmaker** Marc Webb did not want to direct a romantic comedy—until he saw the screenplay for *(500) Days of Summer*, written by Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber. The first few lines were these: “Any resemblance to people living or dead is purely accidental. Especially Jenny Beckman. Bitch.” “I liked that,” Mr. Webb says. “It’s fun, and it says, this movie is going to be a little bit different. You might have to engage a little more.” The film was a hit and may someday be regarded as a classic—Roger Ebert gave it the **top-rated 4 stars**. Mr. Webb himself says, “I don’t think this is a profoundly probing movie, but it’s a simple movie that speaks a little bit of the truth, and just dances with reality and is fun.”

- Sometimes, achieving great success at a young age can lead to the problem of continually being asked about your early work despite all the good work you have done since then. One day, Orson Welles and Norman Mailer were having dinner when Mr. Mailer asked Mr. Welles a question about *Citizen Kane*, which Mr. Welles had created at age 25. Mr. Welles groaned and said, “Oh, Norman, not *Citizen Kane*.” At first, Mr. Mailer was surprised, but then he realized what was the problem and said, mentioning his own youthful **world-class work of art**, “Mmm, yeah—it’s like me and *The Naked and the Dead*.” Other people also realized the burden that very great and very early success can have on a person. After seeing *Citizen Kane*, impresario Billy Rose told Mr. Welles, “Quit, kid—you’ll never top it.”

- Actor Will Smith is known as a rapper, TV star, and movie star. He is also known for his ears, and he says that when he was a kid, he resembled Alfred E. Newman, the **funny-looking character** who graces the covers of *Mad* magazine. In fact, one of young Will’s friends told him that he “looked like a car with the doors open.” Today, as a major film star, Will knows exactly where to give the credit for his success: “It’s the ears! Americans have an ear fetish. Absolutely. Americans love people with big ears—Mickey Mouse, Goofy, Ross Perot. America loves ears.”

- One of the ways that comedian Whoopi Goldberg knew that she was beginning to make it big was that caricaturist Al Hirschfeld worked his art on her in *The New York Times* while she was appearing on a **one-woman show** on Broadway. Mr. Hirschfeld traditionally hides his daughter’s name—Nina—in his caricatures, and in his caricature of Ms. Goldberg he wrote “Nina” 40 times. Ms. Goldberg was so pleased with Mr. Hirschfeld’s caricature that she sent him flowers.

- When Chris Rock was still early in his career as a **stand-up comedian**, his father asked him how good he was. Chris replied, “I’m one of the best in the country.” His father knew him well, and he knew that Chris was not lying.

When Do I Use Italics for Titles?

Use italics for the titles of books, long pieces of choreography, newspapers, plays, and movies.

In general, the titles of long works of art should be italicized.

Title of a Book

- James Herbert, writer of such novels as *Creed*, knows celebrity photographer Richard Young, whose work appears in many celebrity-conscious newspapers and magazines. Mr. Herbert occasionally attends film premieres and parties where real celebrities are present, and he says that Mr. Young “always takes the trouble to photograph me just to make me feel important.” Mr. Young does this even though both he and Mr. Herbert know that the newspaper and magazine photo editors are never going to print Mr. Herbert’s photograph.

Title of a Movie

- Charles Chaplin and Edna Purviance made many silent films together, but after he directed her in the 1923 drama *A Woman of Paris*, she stopped starring in his films. Nevertheless, although she seldom appeared in his films, he kept her under contract as a way to help her financially. She did appear in small roles in his movies *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947) and *Limelight* (1952).

Title of a Long Play, and Title of a Newspaper

- Playwright Tennessee Williams hated racism. In 1947, his play *Glass Menagerie* played to all-white audiences in Washington, D.C. He tried to stop this from happening, but he was unable. Therefore, he wrote to *The New York Times* that “any future contract I make will contain a clause to keep the show out of Washington while this undemocratic practice continues.” Mr. Williams could see the humor in life as well as the evil. In 1977 he was asked to leave the Shaw Theater in London because he kept laughing during a performance of *The Glass Menagerie*. Michael Billington writes that “his incessant hilarity at this memory of his own youth was disturbing the rest of the audience.”

Title of a TV Series

- Comedians Jimmy Durante and Don Knotts once co-hosted a *Kraft Music Hall* special on TV. During rehearsal, the director said that when they were introduced, he wanted both of them to walk onstage doing the famous Jimmy Durante strut. In other words, Mr. Durante was supposed to be himself and Mr. Knotts was supposed to imitate Mr. Durante. However, Mr. Durante was forced to ask Mr. Knotts to show him the famous Jimmy Durante strut. He requested, “Hey, Don, do me! I don’t know what I do!”

Use Italics for Emphasis

If you wish to emphasize a word or to show that a person emphasized a word in dialogue, italicize that word.

- Controversial film director John Waters has many talents, including the ability to give an entertaining pitch to people who may invest money that he can use to make his movies. Once he wrote a screenplay about a skinhead invasion of a community, and he pitched it to Dawn Steel of Disney, who listened to him, then joked, “Well, *sure*, when I heard ‘skinheads,’ I thought Disney!” Mr. Waters says, “She knew that they weren’t going to do it, but I give an entertaining pitch, so she took the meetings anyway.”

- While filming *Some Like It Hot*, Marilyn Monroe frequently had trouble remembering even the simplest lines. For example, in one scene she was supposed to open a drawer and say, “Where’s the bourbon?” However, she blew the line in take after take. Therefore, director Billy Wilder ordered that the line be pasted in the drawer so she could read it. In the very next take, Ms. Monroe opened the wrong drawer—so Mr. Wilder ordered that the line be pasted in *every* drawer.

- Buster Keaton was a hard-working comedian. Garry Moore once asked Buster how he was able to perform his pratfalls, and Buster said, “I’ll show you.” Then he showed Mr. Moore the bruises on his body. Mr. Moore later said, “So that’s how he did it—*it hurt*—but you had to care enough not to care.”

- Dahlia Messick wanted to be a cartoonist, but she noticed that when she took her artwork around to the studios that the male decision-makers would only briefly look at her artwork but would ask her out to lunch. Therefore, she adopted the gender-neutral name *Dale* Messick and started mailing her artwork to studios. Eventually, she created the very successful comic strip *Brenda Starr, Reporter*.

- On October 18, 1981, Wake Forest was playing Maryland in football. A rainstorm knocked out the telephone lines, so Assistant Maryland Coach Jerry Eisman, who was in the press box, started communicating with his bench by walkie-talkie. Suddenly, a voice came over the walkie-talkie: “Get off! This is a police emergency frequency.” Mr. Eisman replied, “This *is* an emergency—it’s third down!”

- *MAD* publisher William M. Gaines used to take the *MAD* writers and artists on a trip every year or two. One year, he took everybody to Rome, and they visited the Sistine Chapel, where a tour guide informed them that Michelangelo had spent 15 years painting the ceiling. *MAD* writer Dick DeBartolo explained why: “Yeah, but it was *two* coats!”

- The Nebraska Cornhuskers were losing a game, so coach Bernie Masterson sent in a sub with the orders, “Get in there and play as you’ve never played before.” Unfortunately, the sub promptly fumbled twice. Mr. Masterson pulled him out of the game and told him, “Perhaps you misunderstood me. I didn’t say play as *though* you’ve never played before.”

Use Italics for Foreign Words

Put foreign words in italics.

- In the 1970s, Ohio University President Claude Sowle decided to hold public meetings at which college deans would argue for money for their departments. Of course, these were spectacular events at which college deans wore caps and gowns and argued passionately for money. At one such public meeting, Dr. Henry Lin, Dean of Fine Arts, began his remarks by saying, “*Ni hao*, Dr. Sowle.” Of course, he was speaking flawless Mandarin Chinese, and he continued to speak flawless Mandarin Chinese—which Dr. Sowle did NOT understand—for the rest of his remarks, occasionally using a Chinese abacus to emphasize a financial point. At the end of Dr. Lin’s remarks, President Sowle told him, “Henry, you know I don’t understand Chinese, but I’ve never understood you more clearly than right now—you need big bucks!” (By the way, the late Dr. Lin is the father of Maya Lin, the genius who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.)

- Portrait painting has at least one advantage over portrait photography. Queen Victoria once asked court painter Alfred Chalfont, whether photography would replace painting. The Frenchman replied, “*Ah, non, Madame! Photographie can’t flattère.*”

- An advantage of being a journalist is that you may occasionally get to interview actors you adore. For example, when *Guardian* reporter Libby Brooks was 13, she saw *Dirty Dancing* on video and fell in love with Johnny Castle, who was played by Patrick Swayze. Lots of young girls who saw the movie, including Ms. Brooks, wanted to lose their virginity to Johnny Castle. Years later, she got to interview Mr. Swayze, who repeated for her his famous line from the movie: “Nobody puts Baby in a corner.” Ms. Brooks’ interview with Mr. Swayze was never printed, and she admits today, “In retrospect, I think that my editor was less interested in Swayze than in bringing an end to my relentless badgering to let me interview him.” The movie’s rating prevented many girls from seeing the movie in theaters—they had to wait to see it on video. This meant that some girls were able to be cool by seeing the movie in theaters. Ms. Brooks remembers when a French teacher asked Lindsay Cameron in class, “*Lequel est le dernier film tu as vu?*” (What is the last film you saw?). Ms. Cameron confirmed her status as the coolest girl in class by replying, “*Le Dirty Dancing.*”

- Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach once bought a soda to go that cost 50 cents, handed the cashier \$2, and told her to keep the change. A friend told him that when you order to go, you don’t need to tip, and you certainly don’t tip \$1.50 for a 50-cent soda. Rabbi Shlomo smiled and said, ‘I know, I know. But I’m trying to make up for *unzer tierla yiddalach* [our sweet Jews] who don’t give tips, and consequently make a *chilul hashem* [defame God’s name].’”

- The paparazzi could be annoying to Audrey Hepburn. Once, a photograph of Audrey with her newly bearded son appeared in a magazine. Because of the new beard, the paparazzi had not recognized her son, so this caption appeared with the photograph: “*Audrey com il nuovo amore della sua vita.*” Translation: “Audrey with the new love of her life.” She said, “Well, apart from the ‘new,’ for once they got something right.” That was one media photograph she cut out and framed.

How Do I Use *It's* And *Its*?

its = the possessive form of *it*

Ex: The dog played with its rawhide bone.

Ex: The fox left its burrow.

it's = the contraction of *it is*

Ex: It's raining.

Ex: It's the day before my paper is due.

its' = ?

Its' is not a word. An apostrophe should never follow *its*.

- Drama critic George Oppenheimer was inducted into the Air Force, where he was a part of **its** Motion Picture Unit. As part of his physical, he gave a urine sample, which was picked up by a star-struck private, who put it on a tray, then pointed to another bottle on the tray and said with awe, “Cary Grant.” (Note for young people: Cary Grant was the Brad Pitt of his time.)

- Violinist Mischa Elman was once present at a dinner given by Harpo Marx during which a movie producer listened to some criticisms of his recent movies, then complained of the difficulties of producing. Mr. Elman asked, “If **it's** so hard to make bad pictures, why don't you make good ones?”

- Edmund Gwenn won an Oscar playing Santa Claus in the movie *Miracle on 34th Street*. As Mr. Gwenn lay dying, Jack Lemmon visited him and asked if dying was hard. Mr. Gwenn replied, “Oh, **it's** hard, very hard indeed. But not as hard as doing comedy.”

- John Cho and Kal Penn are the Korean and Indian stars of the 2004 cult movie *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*, but they have done much more acting than that film and **its** sequel. Mr. Cho played Sulu in a *Star Trek* movie and appeared as a hip-hop-savvy accountant named Kenny in TV's *Ugly Betty*. Mr. Penn appeared on TV's *House* and landed a role in the dramatic movie *The Namesake* in part because of *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*. He explains that *Namesake* director Mira Nair let him audition because “her 14-year-old son, who was a *Harold & Kumar* fan, [...] every night before bed said, ‘Mom, please audition Kal Penn for the part.’”

- Figure skater Christopher Bowman once performed in a costume consisting of a black velvet suit whose major features consisted of a white collar and plunging neckline. Reporters tried to find words sufficient to describe the features of the outfit, and *National* reporter Julie Vader said, “**It's** a shawl collar.” When someone asked how she knew that, she explained, “I have a dress exactly like it.”

How Do I Use *Lie* And *Lay*?

Lay: *Lay* is a verb that means to put something or to place something. *Lay* needs a direct object.

Ex: **Lay** the book on the table.

Lie: *Lie* is a verb that means to rest on a surface or to recline on a surface. *Lie* does not need a direct object.

Ex: You have a fever, so **lie** down and rest.

Lay: *Lay* is also the past tense of *lie*.

Ex: Last night, she **lay** in bed.

Note: “Sic” is used to point out a mistake that appears in the original source.

- Theatrical maven George Abbott both wrote and directed plays. Therefore, he was very particular about language. When he was in his late 90s, he fell while on a golf course. His wife pleaded, “George! George! Get up, please. Don’t just lay [sic] there!” Mr. Abbott looked up at his wife and corrected her: “**Lie** there.”

- After soprano Leslie Garrett won the Cleethorpes Cup at the Cleethorpes Festival, her father took her to a pub to celebrate. While her father wasn’t watching, Ms. Garrett drank a concoction known as a Blue Country, consisting of a pint of Guinness and a shot from every bottle in the bar. The next morning, she woke up with a hangover—unfortunately, she needed to audition that afternoon for a grant that would pay for her college education. Desperate for help, she attended a warm-up session with her voice teacher. However, her voice teacher saw that she had a hangover and was unable to sing well, so she told Ms. Garrick, “You’ve ruined your chances—I hope you’re proud of yourself.” Ms. Garrick went to the audition alone, where a kind receptionist noticed how haggard she looked. The receptionist invited her to **lie** down, and she moved Ms. Garrick’s audition time to last, giving her the maximum amount of time to recover. The time for rest worked, and Ms. Garrick recovered her voice and sang superbly, thus saving her college education and her future career as a principal soprano with the English National Opera.

- To illustrate his Caldecott Medal-winning picture-book, *Make Way for Ducklings*, Robert McCloskey needed to know what the underside of a duck’s bill looked like in flight. Therefore, Mr. McCloskey brought a live duck home, wrapped it in a towel, and put it on a couch in such a way that its head stuck out. Mr. McCloskey then **lay** underneath the duck’s head and sketched what he saw.

- Young dancer Alicia Alonso had two operations on her eyes to repair detached retinas, forcing her to **lie** still for months until the physicians allowed her to get up from bed. As she **lay** in bed, she practiced dancing using only her fingers, moving them as she visualized the movements of the dancers in such ballets as *Giselle*. When she finally got out of bed, she was unable to stand by herself, but she got herself in shape again and became a world-famous ballerina.

How Do I Use *Lose* And *Loose*?

Lose is the opposite of *win*, and the opposite of *find*.

Loose is the opposite of *tight*, and the opposite of *tied up* or *restrained*.

- Children’s book writer Phyllis Reynolds Naylor did a lot of writing when she was young, and she illustrated the stories she wrote. When she learned to draw lace, suddenly the heroines of her stories began to **lose** their clothing so young Phyllis could draw their lacy underwear. On another occasion, her mother explained the facts of life to her, and so young Phyllis wrote a “Manual for Pregnant Women,” complete with her own drawings. After she showed the book to her mother, the book turned up missing.

- Barry Bonds’ father, professional baseball player Bobby Bonds, taught him many things. For example, he taught him competitiveness by playing pool with him at home. The winner of the game would get candy, while the loser had to do push-ups. Barry says, “When I played with my dad, he was such a competitor—he couldn’t **lose**.” In addition, Bobby taught his son not to lower himself in reaction to racists. When Barry was young, occasionally he got into fights with white boys who disliked him because of his color. One day, young Barry came home and told his father, “I don’t like white people right now.” Bobby told him, “Don’t ever come in my house like that again. Be proud of who you are. Do not allow their stupidity to make you stupid.”

- French actor Franoise-Joseph Talma took his art seriously. Even when he was near death due to severe illness, he hoped to return to the stage. Mr. Talma had lost much weight, and his skin hung loosely on his body; however, when his friend Alexandre Dumas visited him, Mr. Talma touched the **loose** skin on his own cheeks and said, “What a truthful air this will give to the role of the aged Tiberius.”

- Vince Lombardi was a great high school football coach before he became a great professional football coach. His St. Cecilia Saints, a Catholic team, won 25 games in a row before being held to a 0-0 tie by rival Union Hill. After the game, Mr. Lombardi and his wife met superfan and nun Sister Baptista. All of them were crying. Mrs. Lombardi said, “We didn’t **lose** the game.” Mr. Lombardi said, “But we didn’t win.” And according to Mrs. Lombardi, “Then we started crying all over again.”

- Sometimes, nurses ask silly questions. When Quaker humorist Tom Mullen was in a hospital, he was standing up when he suddenly felt dizzy. He managed to buzz the nurses’ station before he passed out, and when the nurse arrived, he was lying on the floor, semi-conscious, trying to get up. The nurse looked down at him, then asked, “May I help you?” Mr. Mullen wishes today that he had been conscious enough to reply, “No, I’m just crawling about at 2 a.m. looking for **loose** change.”

Where do Periods Go When I Use Parentheses?

If a complete sentence is INside the parentheses, then put the period INside the parentheses.

- French comic filmmaker Jacques Tati carefully observed people and things, as they gave him ideas with which to work. Before creating his movie *Traffic*, he went to a highway and observed. One of the things he noticed was that many people driving away on holiday do not look happy. He also noticed a car that contained a dog that stared at a field that the dog could have played in. **(I highly recommend his *M. Hulot's Holiday*, which, like his other films, doesn't need dialogue.)**

- When war correspondent and photographer Margaret Bourke-White received permission to fly on a bombing expedition during World War II, J. Hampton Atkinson piloted her himself, saying, "I'm going to fly you myself because if you die, I want to die, too." **(Fortunately, neither of them died.)** By the way, while photographer Ms. Bourke-White was attending the University of Michigan in the early 1920s, she kept something strange in her dormitory room bathtub—a pet milk snake.

- *Guardian* journalist Oliver Burkeman once asked his 85-year-old grandmother whether her old age had brought her happiness in any way. She replied that her old age had made it easier to get rid of telemarketers. For example, if a telemarketer started telling her about "broadband internet," she simply told the telemarketer, "I'm in my 80s!" The telemarketer would assume that she was too old to understand or care about the definition of broadband internet and so the telemarketer would hang up the telephone. **(Actually, she understands perfectly well what broadband internet is.)**

If a complete sentence is NOT inside the parentheses, then put the period OUTside the parentheses.

- **Kip Keino won gold medals in the Olympics in both 1968 (1500-meter race) and 1972 (3000-meter steeplechase).** He never made much money from his running—approximately \$20,000—but he used it wisely. He returned to his native Kenya, where he bought land and a house and started an orphanage. Another Olympic medal-winner, Native American Billy Mills, met him in the 1980s. At that time, Kip and his orphanage were taking care of 68 children, and 100 orphans had already grown up and gone into the world to lead their adult lives. As of 2007, Mr. Keino was still taking care of orphans.

- **Back when John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York, was the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, he recognized the importance of education (as he still does).** He says that "it was clear to me that if we did not tackle education, we were going to be in real difficulty." And he—and the teachers, and the parents—did tackle education. In 2006, a young man whom he had known 18 or 19 years ago came up to him and asked, "Do you remember me, sir?" However, it had been so long ago and the young man had changed so much from when he was a boy that John Sentamu did not recognize the young man, who gave him a hint: "You came and pulled me out of bed when you were chair of governors, and told me I must go to school." John Sentamu said, "OK, I remember you now. What are you doing?" The young man replied, "I'm a lecturer in physics." John Sentamu says about this encounter, "I suddenly realized that we can make a difference."

How Do I Use *Principal* And *Principle*?

Principal: two meanings

- the head of a high school or an elementary school (noun)
Ex: The principal is a pal.
- chief or foremost in importance (adjective)
Ex: He is the principal actor in the play.

Principle: a basic truth, a rule, a standard, a moral standard

Ex: The principles of economics are difficult to understand.

• Kenny Ortega was able to choreograph the movie *Dirty Dancing* because he had relevant experience from high school. Whenever a new hot record came out, he and his friends would meet and play the record over and over—sometimes 50 times—before the next Friday night’s dance. Those dances were known for their bottled-up sexual tension. Mr. Ortega says, “It was not uncommon for our high-school dances to be shut down because of all the gyrating and rubbing up against each other. The vice **principal** would routinely come out on the stage and announce, ‘If there is any more dirty dancing in here, the dance will be cancelled.’”

• Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese Consul-General in Bordeaux, rescued thousands of Jews from the Holocaust by directly disobeying his country’s orders and giving visas to Jews so that they could escape to freedom. A devout Roman Catholic, Mr. Mendes knew that he was risking his career, his reputation, and his own money by rescuing Jews. However, he said, “I cannot allow these people to die. Our constitution says that the religion or the politics of a foreigner shall not be used to deny refuge in Portugal. I have decided to follow this **principle**. Even if I am discharged, I can only act as a Christian, as my conscience tells me. If I am disobeying orders, I would rather be with God against men than with men against God.” The Jews used the Portuguese visas to escape to neutral Spain.

• Ryan White became HIV-positive as a result of his hemophilia, and he faced prejudice when other people learned that he had AIDS. Other children called him “faggot,” “homo,” and “queer,” although he wasn’t gay, and they sometimes wrote obscenities on his school locker. In addition, someone slashed the tires on his family’s car, and someone shot a bullet through his family’s living room. (Fortunately, no one was hurt.) Because of the prejudice and the danger that they faced, Ryan and his family moved from Kokomo, Indiana, to Cicero, Indiana. In Kokomo, Ryan had been forced to sue in order to be permitted to go to school, but in Cicero, the **principal** of his school made him feel welcome and educated the other students about AIDS. Being made to feel welcome raised Ryan’s spirits and improved his health, and he soon became a nationally known spokesperson on AIDS issues before dying of AIDS on April 8, 1990. One of the people singing at his funeral was Elton John, who had become a friend during Ryan’s illness.

The American Style is Put Commas and Periods Inside Quotation Marks

The British style is to put commas and periods outside quotation marks, while the American style is put commas and periods inside quotation marks.

The American Style

- Chris Lemmon, the son of actor Jack Lemmon, wrote a memoir of his father titled *A Twist of Lemmon: A Tribute to My Father*. In the book, and in interviews about the book, he tells stories about the two of them chasing a couple of poodles through the yard of actor James Coburn. Chris and Jack look up, see Mr. Coburn glowering at them through a picture window, and they point to each other and say, “It’s his **fault.**” By the way, the late Mr. Coburn was actually a nice guy. Chris said in an interview that “he was just one of the biggest teddy bears you’d ever want to meet on the face of the **earth.**”

- When Yousuf Karsh went to Peter Lorre’s home to photograph the famous actor, he saw a sign by the driveway: “Beware of Ferocious **Dogs.**” The “ferocious dogs” turned out to be a couple of frisky Pekinese, a breed of very small, toy-sized dogs.

- Tim Gill is a gay business executive of the company that manufactures Quark XPress. He serves as a role model by being open about his sexuality. Once, a gay man came up to him and thanked him very quietly for being open about being gay. Mr. Gill told, “It’s really okay—you can say **it.**” The gay man then spoke up loudly and with pride. On another occasion, Mr. Gill mentioned in a speech to the National Press Photographers Association that he had a boyfriend, and afterward a transgendered person—a woman who had become a man—came up and also thanked him for being open about being gay.

- Shawn Edwards, a movie reviewer for Fox-TV in Kansas City, loved movies from an early age. When he was in the seventh grade, he and some friends used a room at their school as a movie studio. Mr. Edwards calls the studio “the claymation **joint,**” and he remembers, “We convinced the science teacher we were working on a science project, built these sets out of papier-mâché and started shooting our epic. It was about a group of cavemen who hunt for a dinosaur for a big celebration and [to] please the volcano before it gets **mad.**” When Mr. Edwards was attending Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, Spike Lee filmed *School Daze* there. Mr. Edwards had broken his ankle during football practice, but he showed up at an audition for small parts and extras. He remembers that the people casting the movie looked at him as if they were thinking, “Baby, there’s not a part in this movie where you can be walking around with a **cast.**” But Mr. Edwards said, “I don’t sing. I don’t dance. I can’t act. And I’m not that funny. I just want to be in the **movie.**” He got lucky and appeared in a scene in which “Da Butt” was played. Mr. Edwards says, “I totally hate that song now because that’s all I heard all spring. It took three freaking days to shoot” that scene.

Use Quotation Marks for Dialogue

When you quote word for word what a person says, enclose that person's words in quotation marks.

- In 2008, Charlize Theron, 32 years old and an Oscar-winner as Best Actress in the movie *Monster*, and AnnaSophia Robb, 14 years old and the lead actress in the kids' movie *Because of Winn-Dixie*, starred together in the movie *Sleepwalking*. Normally, actors will study each other's work before acting together; however, Ms. Robb had seen very few movies starring Ms. Theron. Why? She explains, **"My parents won't let me see them, especially *Monster*."** Of course, winning an Oscar for *Monster* was very satisfying for Ms. Theron, especially because it was so hard to get the movie made and to find distribution for it. Ms. Theron says, **"There wasn't one person in this industry who wanted that film made. We had our financiers calling us at 3 a.m. and asking us what the hell we were doing. They didn't like the way I looked [the beautiful Ms. Theron put on weight for the movie and looked ugly], and they wondered who would want to see this movie. When we finished, we couldn't pay a distributor to take it. We were hours away from signing a straight-to-video deal with Blockbuster when we found a distributor. For that reason alone, the Oscar was especially sweet."**

- In 1994, genocide occurred in Rwanda, when in 100 days hate-filled Hutus murdered 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus, often using machetes as their weapon of choice. Paul Rusesabagina, who managed a hotel in the country's capital, Kigali, saved the lives of 1,268 refugees by turning his hotel into a place of safety. Like so many other heroes, he denies that he is a hero. Like so many other heroes, he became a hero gradually, refusing to turn his back on a few people who needed help, then many people who needed help, then over 1,200 people who needed help. He says, **"Initially, I was not concerned by what was going on. There was a government, there was a war, the United Nations was there. But when I saw the government completely dismantled, I had to take responsibilities. The very first day, I had 26 neighbors in my house. When I had to leave my house, I was not going to leave those people behind. So it became a very big extended family, from 6 to 32, and then 400 and something. That is how it happened—people kept on coming to the hotel. And toward the end, I had 1,268 people. It would have been easier to care for six people—my wife and four children and myself—than caring for a thousand. But if you turn your back, leave a thousand people, that's on your hands. That is cowardice."** Don Cheadle played Mr. Rusesabagina (and was nominated for a Best Actor Oscar) in the 2004 movie *Hotel Rwanda*.

- Robert Mitchum's last movie was *Dead Man* (1995), directed by Jim Jarmusch. In it, Mr. Mitchum's character carried a big shotgun, so Mr. Jarmusch gathered together a bunch of antique shotguns, took them to Mr. Mitchum's house, and asked him to pick the shotgun he wanted to carry in the movie. Mr. Mitchum looked at the antique shotguns, then asked, **"Which one is the lightest?"**

- Jack Lemmon's first big movie was *It Should Happen to You*, starring Judy Holliday and directed by George Cukor. Jack was an enthusiastic actor, and Mr. Cukor kept telling him to act less. Eventually, Jack became upset and yelled, **"If I do it any less, I won't be acting!"** Mr. Cukor replied, **"Exactly."**

When Quoting Part of a Sentence, You May Not Need to Use a Capital Letter

- When American soldiers shot civilians at My Lai in South Vietnam, Hugh C. Thompson and two crewmembers, Glenn Andreotta and Larry Colburn, witnessed what was happening from a helicopter overhead. They landed the helicopter between some advancing American soldiers and a group of Vietnamese civilians consisting of children, women, and old men, and they stopped the American soldiers from killing the Vietnamese civilians. Later, Hugh C. Thompson and his crewmembers took off in the helicopter, and crewmember Mr. Andreotta saw movement in a body-filled ditch. They landed the helicopter and rescued a two-year-old child from among the corpses. Why did they intervene to stop as much of the slaughter and save as many lives as they could? **Hugh C. Thompson explained that “what was going on wasn’t right.”**

- Eileen Daffern was 93 years old in 2007, but that did not stop her from being an activist, especially when it came to resisting nuclear weapons. She says, “The great challenge is to make people realize the power they have to change the world. It can be changed, you know.” She is healthy for her age, she inherited good genes from her parents, and she takes pride in her appearance. When her mother was 90 years old, Eileen saw her looking at her appearance in the mirror. Eileen says, “Her gestures were those of a young girl preening herself. ... I, too, look in the mirror.” **In fact, when she sees photographs that make her look “too ancient,” she gleefully destroys them.**

- When Chilean poet Pablo Neruda was a small child, he was playing in his backyard when a child reached through a hole in the wooden fence and gave him a present: a small toy lamb. Young Pablo quickly retrieved a favorite possession—a pinecone and presented it to the child, whom he could not see, on the other side of the fence. **The adult Mr. Neruda believed that “maybe this small and mysterious exchange of gifts remained inside me also, deep and inexhaustible, giving my poetry light.”** In 1971, he received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

- While in seminary, TV’s Mister Rogers visited a church where he heard a sermon that he thought was terrible and violated everything that he had learned about writing and delivering sermons. However, the woman sitting next to him had tears running down her face, and she whispered, “He said exactly what I needed to hear.” That day, Mister Rogers learned **that “the space between a person doing his or her best to deliver a message of good news and the needy listener is holy ground.”**

- According to the Rabbi of Sadagora, we can learn about God from the inventions of Humankind. From a train, we can learn **that “because of one second we can miss everything.”** From a telegraph, we can learn **that “every word is counted and charged.”** And from a telephone, we can learn **that “what we say here is heard there.”**

Use Single Quotation Marks Within Double Quotation Marks

- Best-selling novelist Jackie Collins got kicked out of her school at age 15, so her parents asked her, “Hollywood or reform school?” Joan, her sister, was making movies in Hollywood, so Jackie chose Hollywood. Joan gave her a lot of freedom, meeting her at the airport and saying before disappearing, “OK, learn to drive, I can’t look after you, I’ve got to go off on location, goodbye, here’s the keys to the car, here’s the list of people who can help you if you get into any trouble.” Jackie says, “And I appreciated that, because [...] I was a street-smart kid, and I wanted to be by myself.” For a while, Jackie appeared in movies—“always playing the Italian girl”—and she was able to take care of herself. When she went out for a part in a movie, guys would tell her, “Well, honey, let’s have dinner and discuss the part.” Jackie says, **“And I would always say, ‘Take your part for yourself,’ and I would leave. So I was always that street-smart kid, you know?”**

- In *Snow Angels*, directed by David Gordon Green, many interesting moments occur when Kate Beckinsale and Sam Rockwell act with three-year-old Gracie Hudson. During the making of the movie, Ms. Beckinsale and Mr. Rockwell were Gracie’s “Pretend Mommy” and “Pretend Daddy.” Mr. Green states, **“Everybody always says, ‘Don’t work with animals and kids,’ but those are the two greatest things.”** Gracie, of course, didn’t understand about cameras and saying lines, so almost everything she said and did was unscripted. The exception: At one point, Mr. Green wanted her to say, “Can I play outside?” Mr. Green says, “That was the only thing that I needed her to say in the whole movie, and for that I had to give her Skittles.”

- English comedian Terry-Thomas was appearing in *The Brass Monkey* with actress Carole Landis, when the director began to worry about getting the movie finished quickly. The director asked Ms. Landis, “Let’s get this thing in the can. Can we work faster?” Ms. Landis replied, **“Not unless you can print on the film, ‘Sorry, folks, about the poor quality, but we had to do it in a hurry.’”**

- Opera singer Helen Traubel once lunched in New York at a small French restaurant. At the table next to hers, a soldier and his new wife were having a wedding party. **Ms. Traubel was sitting near enough to overhear the bride tell a friend, “This is a nice wedding, but I’ve always wanted the kind where someone sings, ‘Oh, Promise Me.’”** Ms. Traubel offered her services—gratis—and the bride cried with happiness when Ms. Traubel sang the song.

- In 1959, Duke Ellington decided to take his band on a European tour. Some band members flew across the ocean, but Duke and seven members of the band decided to sail across. Of course, he was treated with respect and ate frequently at the captain’s table, and some of the first-class passengers asked him for a concert. On the last night of the voyage, Duke and the seven band members with him played for the captain and the first-class passengers, but Duke and his band members didn’t stop there. They played next for the passengers sailing in cabin class, then for the passengers sailing in tourist class, and finally they played for the crewmen in the crew’s quarters. **According to Michael, Duke’s nephew, “That’s how he was about not leaving anybody out. He used to say, ‘I never put anybody in a secondary position.’”**

When Do I Use Quotation Marks for Titles?

In general, use quotation marks for the titles of short works of art, such as a short story, a short poem, a song (as opposed to an album), and a single episode of a TV series.

“Title of a Song”

At the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada, Margaret Murdock appeared to have won the gold medal in the small-bore rifle competition by out-scoring fellow American Lanny Bassham, 1,162 points to 1,161 points. However, the Olympic officials discovered an error in the scoring. One judge had recorded a 9 instead of a 10 for Mr. Bassham. Now the two were tied at 1,162 points apiece. More drama ensued. The tiebreaker awarded the gold medal to Mr. Bassham, leaving the silver for Ms. Murdock. However, Mr. Bassham felt that since the two scores had been equal, Ms. Murdock deserved to stand at the top of the podium with him. At the awards ceremony, he clasped her hand and helped her to the top of the awards podium, and they stood together as “**The Star-Spangled Banner**” played. Mr. Bassham said afterward, “I wanted to show that I felt that her performance equaled mine. There was no way she deserved to stand lower while the anthem was played.”

- Thomas Dolby, who is probably most famous for his song “**She Blinded Me With Science**,” found it easy to give up smoking at age 28. He met actress Kathleen Beller, and she told him that if he smoked, she would never kiss him. Mr. Dolby says, “I really wanted to kiss her. So that did the trick.” They married and had children.

“Episode of a TV Series”

- Some of the plots and dialogue on *The Dick Van Dyke Show* came from real life. The episode “A Bird in the Head Hurts!” was about a bird stalking Ritchie to get locks of his hair for her nest. (This actually happened to a neighbor of series creator Carl Reiner.) The advice given to Laura Petrie in the episode—“Let him wear a pith helmet”—was actually spoken by an ASPCA officer. In the episode “**Never Name a Duck**,” the Petrie family acquires two ducks as pets for Ritchie. (In real life, the Reiner family had acquired two ducks as pets for the children.) One duck died and the other duck soon appeared to be ill. The line about the ill duck—“He looks pale!”—was spoken in real life by Mr. Reiner’s wife, Estelle.

- Actor Patrick Macnee had a chance to display his riding ability in the *Avengers* episode “**Silent Dust**.” He actually rode the same horse that Sir Laurence Olivier had ridden in *Henry V* when he made the speech “Once more into the breach, dear friends.” Then, the horse was two years old. At the time of the filming of the *Avengers* episode, the horse was 22, but still wonderful. Diana Rigg also rode on a horse, but during filming she confessed to Mr. Macnee that she had never been on a horse until the day before yesterday. When he asked what she had done the day before yesterday, she replied, “I went and had a lesson.”

Keep Related Words Together

Words that go together should be kept together.

For example, the word “only” often modifies a number. When that happens, keep the word “only” and the number together.

- Pablo Neruda and Rafael Alberti were both portly poets. They used to take walks together in Paris along the Seine and would use a complete set of the works of Victor Hugo in a bookstore to measure their girth. Mr. Alberti might say, “Good Heavens! I have already outgrown Volume V of *Les Misérables*!” And Mr. Neruda might reply, “I haven’t put on weight. My paunch juts out **only as far as *Notre-Dame de Paris***.”

- When young-adult novelist Robert Cormier was the 8th grade, his family’s house burned down, and the suit that he was going to wear to his 8th-grade graduation ceremony burned up with it. Fortunately, the Cormiers’ neighbors contributed money to buy clothing for them, and young Robert was able to wear a suit to his graduation ceremony. As an adult, Mr. Cormier did good deeds for other people. His novel *I Am the Cheese* contained a telephone number, which happened to be his. He once received a call from a girl in a psychiatric institution who felt that she could identify **only with the protagonist in the novel**. Mr. Cormier says that he and she “had a long talk about how this Adam [the protagonist] in the book was really a reflection of her own life, even though the circumstances were much different.” In the novel, Adam calls his friend Amy Hertz three times. That is the telephone number that the girl in the psychiatric institution called, and many other young people also called it. Sometimes they would ask for Amy. If Mr. Cormier answered the phone, he would pretend to be Amy’s father. If his youngest daughter, Renee, answered the phone and was asked if Amy was there, she would say, “Speaking.”

- After writing her first novel, *The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton became depressed and suffered from writer’s block. It was her boyfriend, David Inhofe, who figured out that she was depressed because she wasn’t writing. Therefore, he came up with an idea to make her start writing again. She would have to write two pages a day. He would stop by in the evening, and if she hadn’t written two pages, they wouldn’t go out. It worked. She wrote *That Was Then, This is Now*. Her publisher accepted it immediately. By the way, S.E. and her boyfriend got married. She wrote her third book, *Rumblefish*, on Thursday nights, because that was when her husband played poker. S.E. lets her husband read her in-progress manuscripts because he always says, “That’s nice, honey,” which is the **only thing** she wants to hear when she is in the middle of writing a book.

Keep Related Words Together

Words that go together should be kept together.

Often, the word “only” modifies a number. When that happens, keep the word “only” and the number together.

- A couple of beefy movie stuntmen thought they could easily defeat martial arts expert Bruce Lee in a fight because he was **only 5-foot-8-inches tall** and weighed **only 145 pounds**, so he demonstrated his strength and skill to them. He placed them a few feet from a swimming pool, gave each of them an inflated bag for protection, and then told them to assume any stance they wanted. He then said that he would attempt to give one kick to each of them, without a windup or a running start, that would send the stuntmen into the swimming pool. Mr. Lee gave one kick, and the first stuntman flew into the pool, then he gave another kick, and the second stuntman flew into the pool.

- Hard-hitting Hall-of-Fame shortstop Honus Wagner was a kind man. When he was the coach of the Pittsburgh Pirates, one of his players struck out with the bases loaded. Mr. Wagner comforted the player by saying to him, “Do you know, I went up to the plate with the bases full once, and it was in World’s Series time, too. A little hit of mine would have scored the winning run, and do you know, I struck out, too.” Actually, Mr. Wagner fibbed a little. He did go to bat with the bases loaded during a World-Series game, but he hit for extra bases instead of striking out. By the way, the most valuable baseball card in history is the very rare 1910 Honus Wagner card. Mr. Wagner himself is the reason the baseball card is so rare. A tobacco company issued the baseball card, putting it in packs of cigarettes, and Mr. Wagner told the tobacco company to withdraw the card. He knew that the photographer who had taken his photograph for the baseball card had been paid \$10. He did not want the photographer to lose out on the money, so he sent the photographer a check for \$10 and a letter that stated, “I don’t want you to miss a chance to sell a picture, but I don’t want my photograph used to sell cigarettes to kids.” For many years, the photographer proudly displayed that letter in his shop window. The tobacco company stopped issuing the card, and **only the few that had already been issued** stayed in circulation.

- As an eight-year-old girl, Tatum O’Neal made *Paper Moon*; for a while afterward, her father, Ryan O’Neal, would not let her make any more movies. However, one day a teenaged Tatum told him that she wanted to use her earnings from *Paper Moon* to buy a horse ranch. He explained, “You made **only \$16,000**. That won’t buy it.” Soon after, Tatum made \$350,000 (and got a percentage) by acting in *The Bad News Bears*.

- During World War II, the Japanese occupied Malaysia from January 1942 to August 1945. After the occupation of the town of Seremban, a Japanese executive decided to use a pond to raise ducks; therefore, he ordered that the pond be fenced in, then he released 600 ducklings into the pond. However, the Malaysians did not appreciate the Japanese executive’s plans. At the end of two months, **only 300 ducklings** were still alive, and at the end of three months, **only 60 ducklings** were still alive. When the Malaysians were questioned about the disappearance of the ducklings, they suggested that the ducklings didn’t know how to swim and therefore must have drowned.

How Do I Recognize and Correct Run-on Sentences?

Definition

A run-on sentence consists of two independent clauses that are connected without any punctuation.

Ex: Hector is a good husband Paris is a bad husband.

Note: An “independent clause” is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a complete sentence.

How to Correct a Run-on Sentence

You may correct a run-on sentence in several ways:

1. Make two sentences out of it.

Hector is a good husband. Paris is a bad husband.

2. Join the sentences together with a comma and a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, or *yet*.

Hector is a good husband, and Paris is a bad husband.

3. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon.

Hector is a good husband; Paris is a bad husband.

4. If the sentences are closely related, you may join them with a semicolon, a transition word such as *however* or *moreover*, and a comma.

Hector is a good husband; however, Paris is a bad husband.

5. Make one of the independent clauses a subordinate clause.

Although Hector is a good husband, Paris is a bad husband.

6. If appropriate, use a dash.

Hector is a good husband—Paris is a bad husband.

The way that you correct a run-on sentence will depend on the context of the sentence.

Use a Semicolon to Join Two Closely Related Independent Clauses

Note: An independent clause is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a sentence.

Two closely related independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place; the Mets are in last place.

Two independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon, a connecting word or phrase such as *however*, *moreover*, or *as a result*, and a comma.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place; however, the Mets are in last place.

- On January 2, 2007, Cameron Hollopeter, 20, suffered a seizure and fell from a New York City subway platform and between the rails of an oncoming subway train. Wesley Autrey immediately leaped down to help him. Because Mr. Autrey did not have time to get Mr. Hollopeter back onto the platform, he covered Mr. Hollopeter's body with his own in the drainage area between the two rails. The train engineer hit the brakes, but the train went over the two men. After the train stopped, Mr. Autrey yelled to the people on the platform, "We're O.K. down here, but I've got two daughters up there. Let them know their father's O.K." Later, Mr. Autrey said about his daring rescue, "**I don't feel like I did something spectacular; I just saw someone who needed help.** I did what I felt was right." Mr. Hollopeter's father, Larry, said, "Mr. Autrey's instinctive and unselfish act saved our son's life."

- In 1994, when she was acting in John Waters' *Serial Mom*, Kathleen Turner discovered that she had rheumatoid arthritis. **She exercised regularly, as the doctor ordered, and she had surgery as necessary; however, for long periods of time she was unable to wear anything but slippers, although she loves shoes.** In an interview with Rachel Cooke that was published in March of 2008, Ms. Turner said that she was very pleased that she had been able to wear shoes for two weeks. She had gone into a shoe store, tried a pair on, and cried, "I can wear these!" The shoe-store employee assisting her said, "Of course you can, dear." Ms. Turner admits, "I scared the h*ll out of him."

- Al Jolson was a huge entertainer in vaudeville, but his career declined. Eventually it was resurrected when the 1946 movie *The Jolson Story*, which starred Bert Parks and won an Oscar for Best Score, came out. How forgotten was Mr. Jolson? He watched the movie in a theater, feeling very proud. At the end of the movie, which was a huge hit, people cheered, and Mr. Jolson overheard a woman say, "It's too bad Jolson couldn't be alive to see this." When Mr. Jolson was big in show biz, he was huge. He often starred in musicals on Broadway, and when he felt like it, 20 minutes into the musical, he would tell the other members of the cast, "Go home." Then he would sing and entertain solo for two hours. **The audience never complained; after all, they had not come to see and hear the musical.** They had come to see and hear Mr. Jolson.

Use a Semicolon to Join Two Closely Related Independent Clauses

Note: An independent clause is a clause that can be correctly punctuated as a sentence.

Two closely related independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place; the Mets are in last place.

Two independent clauses may be joined with a semicolon, a connecting word or phrase such as *however*, *moreover*, or *as a result*, and a comma.

Ex: The Yankees are in first place; however, the Mets are in last place.

- **Movies are rated G, PG, R, and X; so are movie trailers.** Gay comedy writer Bruce Vilanch noticed that the movie trailer for *Chasing Amy* was rated R because of a brief kiss between two women—the trailer had no violence, drug use, or bad language. However, movie trailers rated G showed such things as dinosaurs trying to eat people, men with guns shooting other men with guns, and people screaming as their cars head straight toward a cliff.

- **Ian McEwan wanted to learn to speak correctly when he was young; therefore, he arranged for his best friend, Mark Wing-Davey, whom he calls “a rare and genuine middle-class type,” to say the word “did” whenever Ian mistakenly said the word “done.”** One day, Ian gave an oral presentation in history class on the reforms of Pope Gregory VII. Ian mistakenly said the word “done,” Mark said the word “did,” and the history teacher became angry at what he thought was Mark’s rudeness. Fortunately, Ian was able to explain what had happened.

- Young people’s author Richard Peck has received many letters from the readers of his books. Some are funny, as when someone wrote, “Our teacher told us to write to our favorite author. Could you please get me the address of Danielle Steele?” **Other letters are serious; for example, someone wrote to him about *Remembering the Good Times*, a novel that recounted a suicide and educated the readers about the warning signs of suicides.** The person wrote, “The only trouble with your book is that I didn’t find it in time.”

- S.E. Hinton practically invented young adult literature with her first novel, *The Outsiders*, which depicts teenagers with gritty realism. “S.E.” are the initials for Susan Eloise, and she began the first draft of *The Outsiders* when she was 15. However, she says that no one ever believes that, so she usually says that she started the first draft when she was 16. And since her editors don’t think that anyone will believe that, they often say that she started the first draft when she was 17. At any rate, her first novel was accepted for publication on a day that was important to her: the day she graduated from high school. **The novel, which has sold millions of copies, made readers of many boys; she often gets letters that say, “I didn’t like to read, but then I read this book.”**

How Do I Use *Than* and *Then*?

“Than” is used in comparisons: better than, more than.

“Then” is a time word: If this happens, then that will happen.

- For a while, writers Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur ran a movie studio in which they produced their own scripts. They had a policy of not responding to letters, instead hiring someone to burn their mail each day, unread. However, they did read a letter from a movie theater owner in Iron Mountain, Michigan, which was printed in the *Exhibitors' Herald*, a movie trade magazine. The letter complained that the Hecht-MacArthur movie *The Scoundrel* was bad for business and annoying to the Iron Mountain movie-goers. Hecht and MacArthur spent all day composing an insulting letter, saying among other things that the citizens of Iron Mountain were so backward that they lived in trees. After mailing the letter, Hecht and MacArthur read the reply in the next issue of the *Exhibitors' Herald*. The movie theater owner had written, “Messers Hecht and MacArthur, I have received your letter, framed it and hung it in the lobby of my theatre, where it is attracting a great deal **more attention than** did your motion picture.”

- Playwright Charles MacArthur was rewriting a speech in his play *The Front Page* when producer Jed Harris walked in, looked over his shoulder at the writing, said “That’s no good,” **then** yanked the paper out of the typewriter. Mr. MacArthur let out a roar of rage and started for Mr. Harris, who ran for his life as *Front Page* co-writer Ben Hecht restrained Mr. MacArthur. Later, Mr. MacArthur and Mr. Hecht added this scene to their play.

- Frank Sinatra spent money freely. A valet once brought him his car, and Frank asked him what had been the biggest tip he had ever received. The valet replied that it had been \$100. Frank gave him a \$200 tip, and **then** he asked the valet who had given him the \$100 tip. The valet replied, “You did, sir. Last week.” Sammy Davis, Jr., imitated Frank’s free-spending ways, with the result that he met with an accountant, who advised him to cut down on his expenses or face financial ruin. The next day, Sammy sent the accountant a gift: a gold Cartier cigarette case inscribed, “Thanks for the advice.”

- George Carlin’s mother, Mary, was a kind woman. When George was a child, he would sometimes talk her into having a meal at the Automat. While they were there, she would often see a man nursing a cup of coffee because he had nowhere to go, and she would give George a quarter—**which bought a lot more then than it does now**—to give to the man. George says, “She really did have a generous heart.” So did George, who used to be part of a comedy team with Jack Burns. (After they split up, Jack became very successful with Avery Schreiber.) One day, George and Jack were goofing around in a Chicago hotel when for some reason Jack threw a paperback out of the window. Suddenly, they remembered that Jack had put his pay in the paperback for safekeeping. They went to the window and watched twenties and fifties float down to the ground, knowing that the money would be long gone by the time they ran down the stairs and reached the street. A nice guy, George split his pay with Jack.

How Do I Use *Their*, *There*, and *They're*?

there = a place

Ex: Put it over there.

they're = they are

Ex: They're in the car.

their = possessive of "they"

Ex: Their coats are in the closet.

Note: We also use the word "there" in phrases such as this: "there were." However, these phrases can be wordy:

Wordy: There were three things that I had to remember.

Not Wordy: I had to remember three things.

- Groucho Marx was occasionally afraid of losing his stardom and his money. In his autobiography, *Groucho and Me*, he explains how this fear started. While working on a movie titled *A Day at the Races*, the director, Sam Wood, said to him, "Groucho, you see those women over there? Well, ten years ago, twelve of the fourteen were stars and earned fifteen hundred dollars a week and more. Today **they're** extras, getting ten and a half dollars. Pity, isn't it?" As soon as the day's shooting was done, Groucho rushed to the phone, called his insurance agent, and bought an annuity to provide for his old age.

- While filming the B horror movie *Evil Dead* in rural Tennessee, actor Bruce Campbell withdrew some money from a local bank, then realized that it smelled funny. He told the bank teller, "This money smells like dirt." She wasn't surprised, saying, "Makes sense. Folks around here still bury it in **their** backyard."

- Lieder singer Lotte Lehmann was frightened of Arturo Toscanini because of his reputation, and she found working with him a "fearful pleasure." Still, shortly after singing for him for the first time, she was relieved to sing a few lieder for a Beethoven association. Before performing, she told a friend, "Oh, I feel so calm. An easy program, a nice appreciative audience, and no Toscanini **there** to be frightened of." At that moment, she looked out at the audience—and saw Toscanini.

- Some convicts are wise guys. In 1986, police in Green Bay, Wisconsin, placed an order for license plates for **their** unmarked police cars. Wisconsin convicts made the license plates, and on each license plate they put the initials "PD"—short for "Police Department." Deputy Police Chief Robert Langan rejected the license plates and sent them back, saying, "They were a dead giveaway."

How Do I Use *To, Two, Too?*

“To” is used (among other uses) in infinitives: to walk, to talk.

“Two” is a number: one, two, three.

“Too” means “excessively” or “very”: too hot, too hard, too soft. It can also mean “also”—I’m going, too.

- Walter Slezak was an actor—he played the part of the German submarine captain in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Lifeboat*. Because his father was the famous opera singer Leo Slezak, he was able **to make** his stage debut very early in life. At the Cologne Opera House, the director of the opera *Lohengrin* created a startling trick with perspective. At first, a boat carrying Lohengrin seemed far away, then it seemed very close **to the audience**. The trick worked through the use of **two** boats. The first boat was actually very small, and the Lohengrin seen in it was actually a child, wearing a fake beard **to seem** like the adult Lohengrin. The second boat was large and carried the adult tenor singing the part of Lohengrin. At one performance, the tiny but bearded Lohengrin was four-year-old Walter Slezak.

- Mary Badham, who played Scout in the movie version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, did not want filming **to end**, so on the last day of shooting the movie, she deliberately flubbed several takes. However, her mother finally told her **to say** the lines because if shooting took much longer, the Los Angeles traffic would be very bad. During the making of the movie, the child actors frequently made Gregory Peck a target of their water pistols, so when the last take was completed, he stepped away quickly and laughed as the lighting crew poured buckets of water on the child actors. By the way, Mary was feisty. She was a 9-year-old who was playing a younger child, and when someone told her that she was little for her age, she replied, “You’d be little, **too**, if you drank as much coffee as I do.”

- Theodor Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, disliked making the movie *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T*, and the critics hated it, but it did provide one happy memory for him. The movie featured 150 boy pianists, and one day the movie studio made the mistake of giving the boys’ weekly salary **to the boys** instead of **to the boys’ parents or agents**. The boys happily gorged themselves on way **too many** hot dogs and way **too much** other junk food, and then filming resumed. One boy vomited, and this caused a chain reaction, as one boy after another upchucked the results of a junk-food orgy.

How Do I Use *Who* and *Whom*?

Use “who” and “whom” to refer to people. “Who” is a subject. “Whom” is an object.

Use “that” and “which” to refer to things.

- Comedian Fred Allen once met a fan **who told him** that she had traveled to New York all the way from San Francisco to see him broadcast his radio program. Mr. Allen replied, “Madame, if I had only known you were coming all that way just to catch my little old show, the least I could have done was meet you halfway—say, about Omaha.”

- Back when vaudeville was alive and well, Eddie Cantor and George Jessel were performing together. Mr. Cantor made an ad-lib that got a big laugh, and then Mr. Jessel made an ad-lib that got an even bigger laugh. Not knowing anything to say to get a bigger laugh than Mr. Jessel, Mr. Cantor took off a shoe and hit Mr. Jessel on the head with it. Upset, in part because of the huge laugh that Mr. Cantor had gotten by hitting him, Mr. Jessel started complaining to the audience, “Ladies and gentlemen, this so-called grown-up man, **whom** I have the misfortune to be working with, is so lacking in decorum, breeding, and intelligence, that when he was unable to think of a clever retort he had to descend to the lowest form of humor by taking off his shoe and striking me on the head. Only an insensitive oaf would sink so low.” Mr. Cantor had the perfect response to Mr. Jessel’s speech. He hit Mr. Jessel on the head with his shoe again.

- British comedian David O’Doherty once performed in front of 40 people, **20 of whom** were members of the Active Elderly Association, which meant that much of his audience were in their eighties. Unfortunately, his act was not meant for people in their eighties, so he was performing routines about iPhones and about spying on a naked lady doing aerobics when he was 12 years old. During intermission, he figured that all the old people would leave, but they were still present when he walked out for the second half of his act. He asked them, “Why are you still here?” One of the old people replied, “The bus doesn’t come to get us until 11.” He also used to do readings of children’s books in libraries. Ten minutes after he began reading one book, a small boy raised his hand and asked, “Does this get good soon?” Mr. O’Doherty says, “It was so profound. How many times—not just at a gig, but in a relationship or at a family get-together—have you wanted to raise your hand and ask that?”

- Sam Mayo was a British music-hall comedian **who** was popular for a time, but whose comedy fell out of favor and forced his retirement. After retiring, he used to stand outside of music halls listening to the applause given to other performers as tears ran down his cheeks.

- Comedian Robin Williams earned great fame as Mork of the TV sitcom *Mork and Mindy*. Mork was an outer-space alien, and when Mr. Williams was asked at an audition to sit in a chair while in character as Mork, he did exactly that—and sat on his head. Fame really did come quickly. At an ice-skating rink, Mr. Williams stepped into a telephone booth to make a call. He was recognized by fans, **who** gawked at him through the glass. Mr. Williams says, “I felt like I was in the San Diego Zoo.”

How Do I Use *Who* and *Whom*?

Use “who” and “whom” to refer to people. “Who” is a subject. “Whom” is an object.

- Actress Jessica Lange has won two Oscars, and her advice to anyone **who is nominated** for an Oscar is to have a few words that you can say “just in case” you win. She also says that the best speech ever given by a winner was very short. Tommy Lee Jones said, “Thanks for all the work.” In Hollywood, getting work is very important.

- Comedian Drew Carey sometimes has the persona of a very outspoken and sarcastic person, but he does good deeds. After the taping of an episode of Mr. Carey’s TV sitcom, *The Drew Carey Show*, a man in the audience refused to leave until he had spoken to Mr. Carey. Of course, celebrities sometimes attract weird—and dangerous—fans. However, after Mr. Carey learned that the man was a former Marine like himself, he talked to the man for approximately 90 minutes. An unnamed source **who spoke** to Kathleen Tracy, author of *Home Brewed: The Drew Carey Story*, said, “It turns out the guy had just been discharged. He was depressed and was really having a hard time adjusting to life outside of the service. He didn’t know what his future held and felt aimless.” Mr. Carey had felt the same way, so he knew what the man was feeling—and he was able to give him some encouraging words. In addition, Mr. Carey once organized a benefit for Antonio, an employee at the Improv, whose son had been shot and was racking up expensive medical bills. **Another anonymous source who spoke** to Ms. Tracy said, “Hardly anybody knew that Drew had done that, because it isn’t something he’d ever advertise. But that’s the kind of guy Drew is.” Antonio also is capable of great kindness. When Mr. Carey was a young comedian struggling to be successful, Antonio gave him free food.

- Director Werner Herzog originally wanted Jason Robards to star in his movie *Fitzcarraldo*, in which a 340-ton steamship is carried over a mountain (the people involved in making the film actually did this) in the Peruvian rainforest, but Mr. Robards contracted amoebic dysentery and was unable to keep on filming the movie. Therefore, Mr. Herzog hired Klaus Kinski, **whom** critic Giles Harvey describes as an “incendiary, egomaniacal, tantrum-prone bull.” Of course, Mr. Kinski acted in such a way as to live up to Mr. Harvey’s description of him, and a Native American chief who had been hired for the movie told Mr. Herzog that he was more than willing to kill Mr. Kinski. Mr. Herzog declined the offer—which was appreciated.

- Even big-time directors like Francis Ford Coppola don’t have as much power as people tend to think they do. In 1997, he wanted to cast Johnny Depp—**whom** he regards as “one of the three greatest actors of his generation”—as the lead in *The Rainmaker*, but the movie studio would not let him do that because at the time Mr. Depp was not the major star that he is now. Therefore, Mr. Coppola had to tell him, “Listen, they absolutely forbid me to cast you in this.” Mr. Depp replied, “But we thought you were a god!” Mr. Coppola says, “A lot of people think that being a name director, you do absolutely what you want to do and only what you want to do. Maybe Steven Spielberg’s earned that right with his extraordinary career. But he would be the only one who has that type of power.”

How Do I Use *Your* And *You're*?

your = possessive form of *you*

Ex: Your coat is in that closet.

Ex: Your car is at the carwash.

you're = contraction of *you are*

Ex: You're standing in the rain.

Ex: You're an incredibly sensitive woman.

- When she was a little girl, actress Samantha Morton attended drama club with other little kids. For one lesson, she was supposed to improvise a scene with another little girl. The two girls stood in front of the group, and the drama teacher whispered to little Samantha the theme of the improvisation: “The other girl’s stolen **your** hamster.” Samantha responded by improvising in her own way. She says, “I beat the crap out of this girl, and they didn’t ask me back.”

- The day that Carey Mulligan, star of *An Education*, passed her driving test, three cars driven by paparazzi followed her. She tried to do such things as changing lanes to get rid of them, but she ended up driving into cul-de-sacs and making U-turns and getting lost. Eventually, she pulled over, and one of the paparazzi got out of his car and walked to her car and motioned for her to roll down her window. She did, and the paparazzo said, “We know where **you're** going. We can’t take pictures of you there. But do you want us to show you how to get there?” She accepted his help—somewhat reluctantly—and he said, “Okay, I’ll show you where it is, and then we’ll leave you alone. Just follow me.” He led her to the place she was going—it was only two minutes away! Then next day, she went shopping and forgot to feed the parking meter—the same paparazzo fed the meter for her!

- One problem that many actors have is acting in bad weather conditions of extreme heat or extreme cold, often at unpleasant times such as night or very early in the morning. In her acting, Laura Linney deals with industrial-strength issues such as death, illness and personal failure. However, she says, “You know what’s more difficult, what they don’t teach you in drama school? How to act at 4:30 in the morning in the freezing cold or boiling heat. That’s more challenging than any sort of emotional work. And it’s like childbirth. You forget about it once a movie’s finished and **you're** on to the next.” While acting in the 2007 remake of *3:10 to Yuma*, Russell Crowe ran into the problem of an unpleasant acting environment: “We were surrounded by four-and-a-half feet of snow doing scenes where we’re talking about the drought.”

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