

Grammar

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19

Repair sentence fragments.

A sentence fragment is a word group that pretends to be a sentence. Sentence fragments are easy to recognize when they appear out of context, like these:

When the cat leaped onto the table.

Running for the bus.

And immediately popped their flares and life vests.

When fragments appear next to related sentences, however, they are harder to spot.

We had just sat down to dinner. When the cat leaped onto the table.

I tripped and twisted my ankle. Running for the bus.

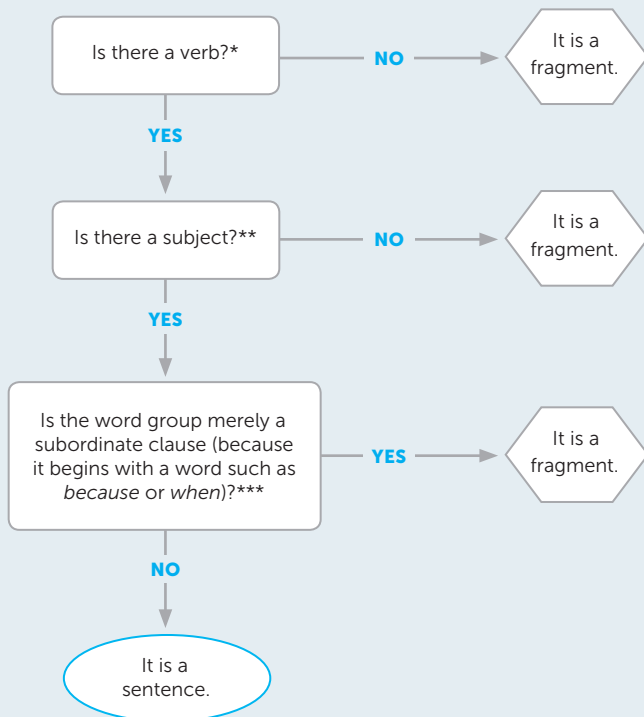
The pilots ejected from the burning plane, landing in the water not far from the ship. And immediately popped their flares and life vests.

Recognizing sentence fragments

To be a sentence, a word group must consist of at least one full independent clause. An independent clause includes a subject and a verb, and it either stands alone or could stand alone.

To test whether a word group is a complete sentence or a fragment, use the flowchart on page 181. By using the flowchart, you can see exactly why *When the cat leaped onto the table* is a fragment: It has a subject (*cat*) and a verb (*leaped*), but it begins with a subordinating word (*When*), which makes the word group a dependent clause. *Running for the bus* is a fragment because it lacks a subject and a verb (*Running* is a verbal, not a verb). *And immediately popped their flares and life vests* is a fragment because it lacks a subject. (See also 48b and 48e.)

Test for fragments



*Do not mistake verbals for verbs. A verbal is a verb form (such as *walking*, *to act*) that does not function as a verb of a clause. (See 48b.)

**The subject of a sentence may be *you*, understood but not present in the sentence. (See 47a.)

***A sentence may open with a subordinate clause, but the sentence must also include an independent clause. (See 19a and 49a.)

If you find any fragments, try one of these methods of revision (see 19a–19c):

1. Attach the fragment to a nearby sentence.
2. Rewrite the fragment as a complete sentence.



MULTILINGUAL Unlike some other languages, English requires a subject and a verb in every sentence (except in commands, where the subject *you* is understood but not present: *Sit down*). See 30a and 30b.

- ▶ *It is*
Is often hot and humid during the summer.
^
- ▶ *are*
Students usually very busy at the end of the semester.
^

Repairing sentence fragments

You can repair most fragments in one of two ways:

- Pull the fragment into a nearby sentence.
 - Rewrite the fragment as a complete sentence.
- ▶ We had just sat down to dinner, *when* / ~~When~~ the cat leaped onto the table.
^
 - ▶ *Running for the bus,* I tripped and twisted my ankle. ~~Running for the bus.~~
^
 - ▶ The pilots ejected from the burning plane, landing in the water not far from the ship. *They* / ~~And~~ immediately popped their flares and life vests.
^

19a Attach fragmented subordinate clauses or turn them into sentences.

A subordinate clause is patterned like a sentence, with both a subject and a verb, but it begins with a word that marks it as subordinate. The following words commonly introduce subordinate clauses.

after	before	so that	until	while
although	even though	than	when	who
as	how	that	where	whom
as if	if	though	whether	whose
because	since	unless	which	why

Subordinate clauses function within sentences as adjectives, as adverbs, or as nouns. They cannot stand alone. (See 48e.)

Most fragmented clauses beg to be pulled into a sentence nearby.

- ▶ Americans have come to fear the West Nile virus ^{because} ~~Because~~

it is transmitted by the common mosquito.

Because introduces a subordinate clause, so it cannot stand alone. (For punctuation of subordinate clauses appearing at the end of a sentence, see 33f.)

- ▶ Although psychiatrist Peter Kramer expresses concerns

about Prozac, ^{many} ~~Many~~ other doctors believe that the

benefits of antidepressants outweigh the risks.

Although introduces a subordinate clause, so it cannot stand alone. (For punctuation of subordinate clauses at the beginning of a sentence, see 32b.)

If a fragmented clause cannot be attached to a nearby sentence or if you feel that attaching it would be awkward, try turning the clause into a sentence. The simplest way to do this is to delete the opening word or words that mark it as subordinate.

- ▶ Population increases and uncontrolled development are taking a deadly toll on the environment. ^{Across} ~~So that across~~ the globe, fragile ecosystems are collapsing.

19b Attach fragmented phrases or turn them into sentences.

Like subordinate clauses, phrases function within sentences as adjectives, as adverbs, or as nouns. They cannot stand alone. Fragmented phrases are often prepositional or verbal phrases; sometimes they are appositives, words or word groups that rename nouns or pronouns. (See 48a, 48b, and 48c.)

Often a fragmented phrase may simply be pulled into a nearby sentence.

- ▶ The archaeologists worked slowly, ^{examining} ~~Examining~~ and labeling every pottery shard they uncovered.

The word group beginning with *Examining* is a verbal phrase.

- ▶ The patient displayed symptoms of ALS, ^a ~~A~~ neurodegenerative disease.

A neurodegenerative disease is an appositive renaming the noun *ALS*. (For punctuation of appositives, see 32e.)

If a fragmented phrase cannot be pulled into a nearby sentence effectively, turn the phrase into a sentence. You may need to add a subject, a verb, or both.

- ▶ In the training session, Jamie explained how to access our new database. ^{She also taught us} ~~Also~~ how to submit expense reports and request vendor payments.

The revision turns the fragmented phrase into a sentence by adding a subject and a verb.

19c Attach other fragmented word groups or turn them into sentences.

Other word groups that are commonly fragmented include parts of compound predicates, lists, and examples introduced by *for example*, *in addition*, or similar expressions.

Parts of compound predicates

A predicate consists of a verb and its objects, complements, and modifiers (see 47b). A compound predicate includes two or more predicates joined with a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*,

or *or*. Because the parts of a compound predicate have the same subject, they should appear in the same sentence.

- ▶ The woodpecker finch of the Galápagos Islands carefully selects a twig of a certain size and shape, ^{and} ~~And~~ then uses this tool to pry out grubs from trees.

The subject is *finch*, and the compound predicate is *selects . . . and . . . uses*. (For punctuation of compound predicates, see 33a.)

Lists

To correct a fragmented list, often you can attach it to a nearby sentence with a colon or a dash. (See 35a and 39a.)

- ▶ It has been said that there are only three indigenous American art forms: ^{musical} ~~Musical~~ comedy, jazz, and soap opera.

Sometimes terms like *especially, namely, like, and such as* introduce fragmented lists. Such fragments can usually be attached to the preceding sentence.

- ▶ In the twentieth century, the South produced some great American writers, ^{such} ~~Such~~ as Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, Alice Walker, and Tennessee Williams.

Examples introduced by *for example, in addition, or similar expressions*

Other expressions that introduce examples or explanations can lead to unintentional fragments. Although you may begin a sentence with some of the following words or phrases, make sure that what follows has a subject and a verb.

also	for example	mainly
and	for instance	or
but	in addition	that is

Often the easiest solution is to turn the fragment into a sentence.

- ▶ In his memoir, Primo Levi describes the horrors of living in a concentration camp. For example, ^{he worked} ~~working~~ without food and ^{suffered} ~~suffering~~ emotional abuse.

The writer corrected this fragment by adding a subject — *he* — and substituting verbs for the verbals *working* and *suffering*.

- ▶ Deborah Tannen's research reveals that men and women have different ideas about communication. For example, ^{Tannen explains} that a woman "expects her husband to be a new and improved version of her best friend" (441).

A quotation must be part of a complete sentence. *That a woman "expects her husband to be a new and improved version of her best friend"* is a fragment — a subordinate clause. In this case, adding a signal phrase that includes a subject and a verb (*Tannen explains*) corrects the fragment and clarifies that the quotation is from Tannen.


19d Exception: A fragment may be used for effect.

Writers occasionally use sentence fragments for special purposes.

FOR EMPHASIS	Following the dramatic Americanization of their children, even my parents grew more publicly confident. <i>Especially my mother.</i> — Richard Rodriguez
TO ANSWER A QUESTION	Are these new drug tests 100 percent reliable? <i>Not in the opinion of most experts.</i>
TRANSITIONS	<i>And now the opposing arguments.</i>
EXCLAMATIONS	<i>Not again!</i>
IN ADVERTISING	<i>Fewer carbs. Improved taste.</i>

Although fragments are sometimes appropriate, writers and readers do not always agree on when they are appropriate. That's why you will find it safer to write in complete sentences.

EXERCISE 19–1 Repair any fragment by attaching it to a nearby sentence or by rewriting it as a complete sentence. If a word group is correct, write “correct” after it. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

One Greek island that should not be missed is Mykonos,  **A**
vacation spot for Europeans and a playground for the rich
and famous.

- a. Listening to the CD her sister had sent, Mia was overcome with a mix of emotions. Happiness, homesickness, and nostalgia.
 - b. Cortés and his soldiers were astonished when they looked down from the mountains and saw Tenochtitlán. The magnificent capital of the Aztecs.
 - c. Although my spoken Spanish is not very good. I can read the language with ease.
 - d. There are several reasons for not eating meat. One reason being that dangerous chemicals are used throughout the various stages of meat production.
 - e. To learn how to sculpt beauty from everyday life. This is my intention in studying art and archaeology.
1. The panther lay motionless behind the rock. Waiting for its prey.
 2. Aunt Mina loved to play all my favorite games. Cat’s cradle, Uno, mancala, and even hopscotch.
 3. With machetes, the explorers cut their way through the tall grasses to the edge of the canyon. Then they began to lay out the tapes for the survey.
 4. The owners of the online grocery store rented a warehouse in the Market district. An area catering to small businesses.
 5. If a woman from the desert tribe showed anger toward her husband, she was whipped in front of the whole village. And shunned by the rest of the women.

EXERCISE 19–2 Repair each fragment in the following passage by attaching it to a sentence nearby or by rewriting it as a complete sentence.

Digital technology has revolutionized information delivery. Forever blurring the lines between information and entertainment. Yesterday’s readers of books and newspapers are today’s readers of e-books and news blogs. Countless readers have moved on from print information entirely. Choosing instead to point, click,

and scroll their way through a text on their Amazon Kindle or in an online forum. Once a nation of people spoon-fed television commercials and the six o'clock evening news. We are now seemingly addicted to *YouTube*. Remember the family trip when Dad or Mom wrestled with a road map? On the way to St. Louis or Seattle? No wrestling is required with a slick GPS navigator by the driver's side. Unless it's Mom and Dad wrestling over who gets to program the address. Accessing information now seems to be America's favorite pastime. John Horrigan, associate director for research at the Pew Internet and American Life Project, reports that 31 percent of American adults are "elite" users of technology. Who are "highly engaged" with digital content. As a country, we embrace information and communication technologies. Which include iPods, cell phones, laptops, and handheld devices. Among children and adolescents, Internet and other personal technology use is on the rise. For activities like socializing, gaming, and information gathering.

20

Revise run-on sentences.

Run-on sentences are independent clauses that have not been joined correctly. An independent clause is a word group that can stand alone as a sentence. (See 49a.) When two independent clauses appear in one sentence, they must be joined in one of these ways:

- with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*)
- with a semicolon (or occasionally with a colon or a dash)

Recognizing run-on sentences

There are two types of run-on sentences. When a writer puts no mark of punctuation and no coordinating conjunction between independent clauses, the result is called a *fused sentence*.

FUSED

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
Air pollution poses risks to all humans it can be
INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
deadly for asthma sufferers.

A far more common type of run-on sentence is the *comma splice*—two or more independent clauses joined with a comma but without a coordinating conjunction. In some comma splices, the comma appears alone.

**COMMA
SPLICE**

Air pollution poses risks to all humans, it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

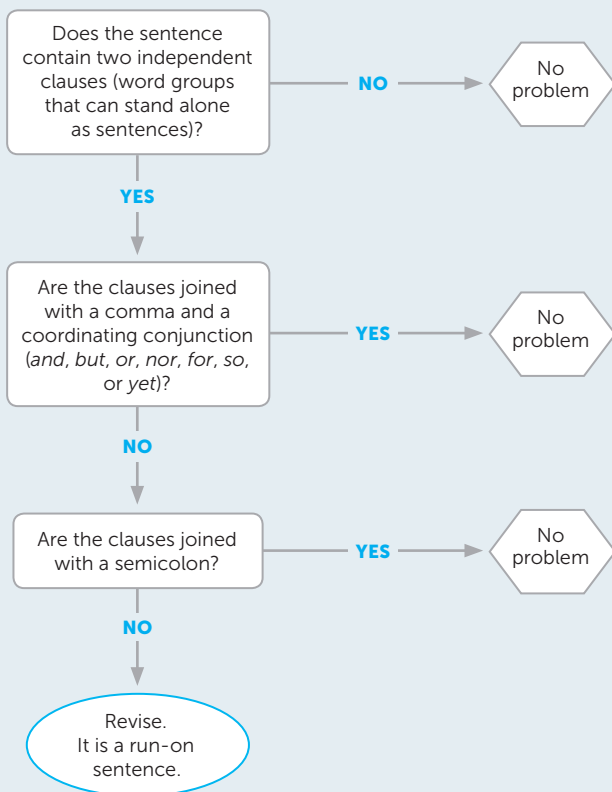
In other comma splices, the comma is accompanied by a joining word that is *not* a coordinating conjunction. There are only seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, and *yet*.

**COMMA
SPLICE**

Air pollution poses risks to all humans, however, it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

However is a transitional expression and cannot be used with only a comma to join two independent clauses (see 20b).

Recognizing run-on sentences



If you find an error, choose an effective method of revision. See 20a–20d for revision strategies.

Revising run-on sentences

To revise a run-on sentence, you have four choices.

1. Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*).

▶ Air pollution poses risks to all humans, ^{but} it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

2. Use a semicolon (or, if appropriate, a colon or a dash). A semicolon may be used alone or with a transitional expression.

▶ Air pollution poses risks to all humans; it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

▶ Air pollution poses risks to all humans; ^{however,} it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

3. Make the clauses into separate sentences.

▶ Air pollution poses risks to all humans. ^{It} it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

4. Restructure the sentence, perhaps by subordinating one of the clauses.

▶ ^{Although air} Air pollution poses risks to all humans, it can be deadly for asthma sufferers.

One of these revision techniques usually works better than the others for a particular sentence. The fourth technique, the one requiring the most extensive revision, is often the most effective.

20a Consider separating the clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, and *yet*. When a coordinating conjunction joins independent clauses, it is usually preceded by a comma. (See 32a.)

- ▶ Some lesson plans include exercises, ^{but} completing them should not be the focus of all class periods.

20b Consider separating the clauses with a semicolon (or, if appropriate, with a colon or a dash).

When the independent clauses are closely related and their relation is clear without a coordinating conjunction, a semicolon is an acceptable method of revision. (See 34a.)

- ▶ Tragedy depicts the individual confronted with the fact of death;[;] comedy depicts the adaptability of human society.

A semicolon is required between independent clauses that have been linked with a transitional expression (such as *however*, *therefore*, *moreover*, *in fact*, or *for example*). For a longer list, see 34b.

- ▶ In his film adaptation of the short story “Killings,” director Todd Field changed key details of the plot;[;] in fact, he added whole scenes that do not appear in the story.

A colon or a dash may be more appropriate if the first independent clause introduces the second or if the second clause summarizes or explains the first. (See 35b and 39a.) In formal writing, the colon is usually preferred to the dash.

- ▶ Nuclear waste is hazardous; ^{This} ~~this~~ is an indisputable fact.
- ▶ The female black widow spider is often a widow of her own making; ~~she~~ has been known to eat her partner after mating.

A colon is an appropriate method of revision if the first independent clause introduces a quoted sentence.

- ▶ Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore had this to say about climate change; ~~“~~“The truth is that our circumstances are not only new; they are completely different than they have ever been in all of human history.”

20c Consider making the clauses into separate sentences.

- ▶ Why should we spend money on expensive space exploration; ^{We} ~~we~~ have enough underfunded programs here on Earth.

Since one independent clause is a question and the other is a statement, they should be separate sentences.

- ▶ Some studies have suggested that the sexual relationships of bonobos set them apart from common chimpanzees; ^{According} ~~according~~ to Stanford (1998), these differences have been exaggerated.

Using a comma to join two independent clauses creates a comma splice. In this example, an effective revision is to separate the first independent clause (*Some studies . . .*) from the second independent clause (*these differences . . .*) and to keep the signal phrase with the second clause. (See also 63.)

NOTE: When two quoted independent clauses are divided by explanatory words, make each clause its own sentence.

- ▶ “It’s always smart to learn from your mistakes,” quipped my supervisor. ^{“It’s} ~~it’s~~ even smarter to learn from the mistakes of others.”

20d Consider restructuring the sentence, perhaps by subordinating one of the clauses.

If one of the independent clauses is less important than the other, turn it into a subordinate clause or phrase. (For more about subordination, see 14, especially the chart on p. 144.)

- ▶ One of the most famous advertising slogans is Wheaties cereal’s “Breakfast of Champions,” ^{which} ~~it~~ was penned in 1933.
- ▶ Mary McLeod Bethune, ^{was} ~~she~~ the seventeenth child of former slaves, ~~she~~ founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1935.

Minor ideas in these sentences are now expressed in subordinate clauses or phrases.

EXERCISE 20–1 Revise the following run-on sentences using the method of revision suggested in brackets. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

^{Because}

~~^~~ Daniel had been obsessed with his weight as a teenager, he rarely ate anything sweet. [*Restructure the sentence.*]

- a. The city had one public swimming pool, it stayed packed with children all summer long. [*Restructure the sentence.*]
- b. The building is being renovated, therefore at times we have no heat, water, or electricity. [*Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction.*]

- c. The view was not what the travel agent had described, where were the rolling hills and the shimmering rivers? [*Make two sentences.*]
- d. All those gnarled equations looked like toxic insects, maybe I was going to have to rethink my major. [*Use a semicolon.*]
- e. City officials had good reason to fear a major earthquake, most of the business district was built on landfill. [*Use a colon.*]
1. The car was hardly worth trading, the frame was twisted and the block was warped. [*Restructure the sentence.*]
2. The next time an event is canceled because of bad weather, don't blame the meteorologist, blame nature. [*Make two sentences.*]
3. Ray was fluent in American Sign Language he could sign as easily as he could speak. [*Restructure the sentence.*]
4. Susanna arrived with a stack of her latest hats she hoped the gift shop would place a big winter order. [*Restructure the sentence.*]
5. There was one major reason for John's wealth, his grandfather had been a multimillionaire. [*Use a colon.*]

EXERCISE 20-2 Revise any run-on sentences using a technique that you find effective. If a sentence is correct, write "correct" after it. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

Crossing so many time zones on an eight-hour flight, I knew

I would be tired when I arrived, ^{but}~~however,~~ I was too excited

to sleep on the plane.

- a. Wind power for the home is a supplementary source of energy, it can be combined with electricity, gas, or solar energy.
- b. Aidan viewed Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* three times and then wrote a paper describing the film as the work of a mysterious modern painter.
- c. In the Middle Ages, the streets of London were dangerous places, it was safer to travel by boat along the Thames.
- d. "He's not drunk," I said, "he's in a state of diabetic shock."
- e. Are you able to endure extreme angle turns, high speeds, frequent jumps, and occasional crashes, then supermoto racing may be a sport for you.

1. Death Valley National Monument, located in southern California and Nevada, is one of the hottest places on Earth, temperatures there have soared as high as 134° Fahrenheit.
2. Anamaria opened the boxes crammed with toys, out sprang griffins, dragons, and phoenixes.
3. Subatomic physics is filled with strange and marvelous particles, tiny bodies of matter that shiver, wobble, pulse, and flatten to no thickness at all.
4. As his first major project, Frederick Law Olmsted designed New York City's Central Park, one of the most beautiful urban spaces in the United States.
5. The neurosurgeon explained that the medication could have one side effect, it might cause me to experience temporary memory loss.

EXERCISE 20-3 In the rough draft that follows, revise any run-on sentences.

Some parents and educators argue that requiring uniforms in public schools would improve student behavior and performance. They think that uniforms give students a more professional attitude toward school, moreover, they believe that uniforms help create a sense of community among students from diverse backgrounds. But parents and educators should consider the drawbacks to requiring uniforms in public schools.

Uniforms do create a sense of community, they do this, however, by stamping out individuality. Youth is a time to express originality, it is a time to develop a sense of self. One important way young people express their identities is through the clothes they wear. The self-patrolled dress code of high school students may be stricter than any school-imposed code, nevertheless, trying to control dress habits from above will only lead to resentment or to mindless conformity.

If children are going to act like adults, they need to be treated like adults, they need to be allowed to make their own choices. Telling young people what to wear to school merely prolongs their childhood. Requiring uniforms undermines the educational purpose of public schools, which is not just to teach facts and figures but to help young people grow into adults who are responsible for making their own choices.

21

Make subjects and verbs agree.

In the present tense, verbs agree with their subjects in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second, third): *I sing, you sing, he sings, she sings, we sing, they sing*. Even if your ear recognizes the standard subject-verb combinations presented in 21a, you will no doubt encounter tricky situations such as those described in 21b–21k.

21a Consult this section for standard subject-verb combinations.

This section describes the basic guidelines for making present-tense verbs agree with their subjects. The present-tense ending *-s* (or *-es*) is used on a verb if its subject is third-person singular (*he, she, it*, and singular nouns); otherwise, the verb takes no ending. Consider, for example, the present-tense forms of the verbs *love* and *try*, given at the beginning of the chart on the following page.

The verb *be* varies from this pattern; unlike any other verb, it has special forms in *both* the present and the past tense. These forms appear at the end of the chart.

If you aren't confident that you know the standard forms, use the charts on pages 198 and 199 as you proofread for subject-verb agreement. You may also want to look at 27c on *-s* endings of regular and irregular verbs.

21b Make the verb agree with its subject, not with a word that comes between.

Word groups often come between the subject and the verb. Such word groups, usually modifying the subject, may contain a noun that at first appears to be the subject. By mentally stripping away such modifiers, you can isolate the noun that is in fact the subject.



The *samples* on the tray in the lab *need* testing.

- ▶ High levels of air pollution causes damage to the respiratory tract.

The subject is *levels*, not *pollution*. Strip away the phrase *of air pollution* to hear the correct verb: *levels cause*.

- ▶ The slaughter of pandas for their pelts has caused the panda population to decline drastically.

The subject is *slaughter*, not *pandas* or *pelts*.

NOTE: Phrases beginning with the prepositions *as well as*, *in addition to*, *accompanied by*, *together with*, and *along with* do not make a singular subject plural.

- ▶ The governor as well as his press secretary were on the plane.

To emphasize that two people were on the plane, the writer could use *and* instead: *The governor and his press secretary were on the plane*.

21c Treat most subjects joined with *and* as plural.

A subject with two or more parts is said to be compound. If the parts are connected with *and*, the subject is almost always plural.

Leon and Jan often jog together.

- ▶ The Supreme Court's willingness to hear the case and its affirmation of the original decision has set a new precedent.

EXCEPTIONS: When the parts of the subject form a single unit or when they refer to the same person or thing, treat the subject as singular.

Fish and chips was a last-minute addition to the menu.

Sue's friend and adviser was surprised by her decision.

Subject-verb agreement at a glance

Present-tense forms of *love* and *try* (typical verbs)

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	love	we	love
SECOND PERSON	you	love	you	love
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it*	loves	they**	love

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	try	we	try
SECOND PERSON	you	try	you	try
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it*	tries	they**	try

Present-tense forms of *have*

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	have	we	have
SECOND PERSON	you	have	you	have
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it*	has	they**	have

Present-tense forms of *do* (including negative forms)

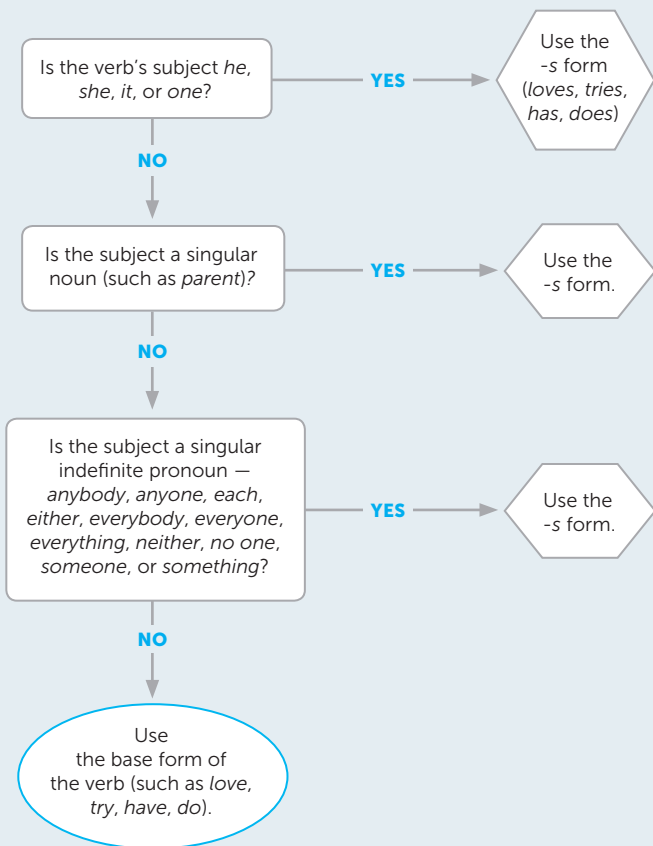
	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	do/don't	we	do/don't
SECOND PERSON	you	do/don't	you	do/don't
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it*	does/doesn't	they**	do/don't

Present-tense and past-tense forms of *be*

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	am/was	we	are/were
SECOND PERSON	you	are/were	you	are/were
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it*	is/was	they**	are/were

*And singular nouns (*child, Roger*)

**And plural nouns (*children, the Mannings*)

When to use the -s (or -es) form of a present-tense verb

EXCEPTION: Choosing the correct present-tense form of *be* (*am, is, or are*) is not quite so simple. See the chart on the previous page for both present- and past-tense forms of *be*.

TIP: Do not use the -s form of a verb if it follows a modal verb such as *can, must, or should* or another helping verb. (See 28c.)

When a compound subject is preceded by *each* or *every*, treat it as singular.

Every car, truck, and van is required to pass inspection.

This exception does not apply when a compound subject is followed by *each*: *Alan and Marcia each have different ideas.*

21d With subjects joined with *or* or *nor* (or with *either . . . or* or *neither . . . nor*), make the verb agree with the part of the subject nearer to the verb.

A driver's *license* or credit *card* ^{is} required.

A driver's *license* or two credit *cards* ^{are} required.

- ▶ If an infant or a child ^{is} ~~are~~ having difficulty breathing, seek medical attention immediately.

- ▶ Neither the chief financial officer nor the marketing managers ^{were} ~~was~~ able to convince the client to reconsider.

The verb must be matched with the part of the subject closer to it: *child* is in the first sentence, *managers* were in the second.


NOTE: If one part of the subject is singular and the other is plural, put the plural one last to avoid awkwardness.

21e Treat most indefinite pronouns as singular.

Indefinite pronouns are pronouns that do not refer to specific persons or things. The following commonly used indefinite pronouns are singular.

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

Many of these words appear to have plural meanings, and they are often treated as such in casual speech. In formal written English, however, they are nearly always treated as singular.

 *Everyone* on the team *supports* the coach.

▶ Each of the essays ^{has} ~~have~~ been graded.

▶ Nobody who participated in the clinical trials ^{was} ~~were~~ given a placebo.

The subjects of these sentences are *Each* and *Nobody*. These indefinite pronouns are third-person singular, so the verbs must be *has* and *was*.

A few indefinite pronouns (*all, any, none, some*) may be singular or plural depending on the noun or pronoun they refer to.

SINGULAR  *Some* of our *luggage* *was* lost.

 *None* of his *advice* *makes* sense.

PLURAL  *Some* of the *rocks* *are* slippery.

 *None* of the *eggs* *were* broken.

NOTE: When the meaning of *none* is emphatically “not one,” *none* may be treated as singular: *None* [meaning “Not one”] *of the eggs was broken*. Using *not one* instead is sometimes clearer: *Not one of the eggs was broken*.

21f Treat collective nouns as singular unless the meaning is clearly plural.

Collective nouns such as *jury, committee, audience, crowd, troop, family, and couple* name a class or a group. In American English, collective nouns are nearly always treated as singular: They emphasize the group as a unit. Occasionally, when there is some reason to

draw attention to the individual members of the group, a collective noun may be treated as plural. (See also 22b.)

SINGULAR The *class* ^{respects} the teacher.

PLURAL The *class* ^{are} debating among themselves.

To underscore the notion of individuality in the second sentence, many writers would add a clearly plural noun.

PLURAL The class *members* ^{are} debating among themselves.

- ▶ The board of trustees ^{meets} ~~meet~~ in Denver twice a year.

The board as a whole meets; there is no reason to draw attention to its individual members.

- ▶ A young couple ^{were} ~~was~~ arguing about politics while holding hands.

The meaning is clearly plural. Only separate individuals can argue and hold hands.

NOTE: The phrase *the number* is treated as singular, *a number* as plural.

SINGULAR The *number* of school-age children ^{is} declining.

PLURAL A *number* of children ^{are} attending the wedding.

NOTE: In general, when fractions or units of measurement are used with a singular noun, treat them as singular; when they are used with a plural noun, treat them as plural.

SINGULAR Three-fourths of the salad ^{has} been eaten.

Twenty inches of wallboard ^{was} covered with mud.

PLURAL One-fourth of the drivers ^{were} texting.

Two pounds of blueberries ^{were} used to make the pie.

21g Make the verb agree with its subject even when the subject follows the verb.

Verbs ordinarily follow subjects. When this normal order is reversed, it is easy to become confused. Sentences beginning with *there is* or *there are* (or *there was* or *there were*) are inverted; the subject follows the verb.

There *are* surprisingly few *honeybees* left in southern China.

- ▶ There *was* a social worker and a neighbor at the meeting.

The subject, *worker and neighbor*, is plural, so the verb must be *were*.

Occasionally you may decide to invert a sentence for variety or effect. When you do so, check to make sure that your subject and verb agree.

- ▶ Of particular concern *is* penicillin and tetracycline, antibiotics used to make animals more resistant to disease.

The subject, *penicillin and tetracycline*, is plural, so the verb must be *are*.

21h Make the verb agree with its subject, not with a subject complement.

One basic sentence pattern in English consists of a subject, a linking verb, and a subject complement: *Jack is a lawyer*. Because the subject complement (*lawyer*) names or describes the subject (*Jack*), it is sometimes mistaken for the subject. (See 47b on subject complements.)

These *exercises* *are* a way to test your ability to perform under pressure.

- ▶ A major force in today's economy *is* children — as consumers, decision makers, and trend spotters.

Force is the subject, not *children*. If the corrected version seems too awkward, make *children* the subject: *Children are a major force in today's economy — as consumers, decision makers, and trend spotters*.

- A tent and a sleeping bag ^{are} ~~is~~ the required equipment for all campers.

Tent and bag is the subject, not *equipment*.

21i Who, which, and that take verbs that agree with their antecedents.

Like most pronouns, the relative pronouns *who*, *which*, and *that* have antecedents, nouns or pronouns to which they refer. Relative pronouns used as subjects of subordinate clauses take verbs that agree with their antecedents.



Take a *course that prepares* you for classroom management.

One of the

Constructions such as *one of the students who* [or *one of the things that*] cause problems for writers. Do not assume that the antecedent must be *one*. Instead, consider the logic of the sentence.

- Our ability to use language is one of the things that ^{sets} ~~set~~ us apart from animals.

The antecedent of *that* is *things*, not *one*. Several things set us apart from animals.

Only one of the

When the phrase *the only* comes before *one*, you are safe in assuming that *one* is the antecedent of the relative pronoun.

- Veronica was the only one of the first-year Spanish students ^{was} ~~were~~ fluent enough to apply for the exchange program.

The antecedent of *who* is *one*, not *students*. Only one student was fluent enough.

21j Words such as *athletics*, *economics*, *mathematics*, *physics*, *politics*, *statistics*, *measles*, and *news* are usually singular, despite their plural form.

- ▶ Politics ^{is} ~~are~~ among my mother's favorite pastimes.

EXCEPTION: Occasionally some of these words, especially *economics*, *mathematics*, *politics*, and *statistics*, have plural meanings.

- ▶ Office politics often sway decisions about hiring and promotion.
- ▶ The economics of the building plan are prohibitive.

21k Titles of works, company names, words mentioned as words, and gerund phrases are singular.

- ▶ *Lost Cities* ^{describes} ~~describe~~ the discoveries of fifty ancient civilizations.
- ▶ Delmonico Brothers ^{specializes} ~~specialize~~ in organic produce and additive-free meats.
- ▶ *Controlled substances* ^{is} ~~are~~ a euphemism for illegal drugs.

A gerund phrase consists of an -ing verb form followed by any objects, complements, or modifiers (see 48b). Treat gerund phrases as singular.

- ▶ Encountering long hold times ^{makes} ~~make~~ customers impatient with telephone tech support.

EXERCISE 21–1 For each sentence in the following passage, underline the subject (or compound subject) and then select the verb that agrees with it. (If you have trouble identifying the subject, consult 47a.)

Loggerhead sea turtles (migrate / migrates) thousands of miles before returning to their nesting location every two to three years. The nesting season for loggerhead turtles (span / spans) the hottest months of the summer. Although the habitat of Atlantic loggerheads (range / ranges) from Newfoundland to Argentina, nesting for these turtles (take / takes) place primarily along the southeastern coast of the United States. Female turtles that have reached sexual maturity (crawl / crawls) ashore at night to lay their eggs. The cavity that serves as a nest for the eggs (is / are) dug out with the female's strong flippers. Deposited into each nest (is / are) anywhere from fifty to two hundred spherical eggs, also known as a *clutch*. After a two-month incubation period, all eggs in the clutch (begin / begins) to hatch, and within a few days the young turtles attempt to make their way into the ocean. A major cause of the loggerhead's decreasing numbers (is / are) natural predators such as raccoons, birds, and crabs. Beach erosion and coastal development also (threaten / threatens) the turtles' survival. For example, a crowd of curious humans or lights from beachfront residences (is / are) enough to make the female abandon her nesting plans and return to the ocean. Since only one in one thousand loggerheads survives to adulthood, special care should be taken to protect this threatened species.

EXERCISE 21–2 Edit the following sentences to eliminate problems with subject-verb agreement. If a sentence is correct, write "correct" after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

Jack's first days in the infantry ^{were} ~~was~~ grueling.
^

- One of the main reasons for elephant poaching are the profits received from selling the ivory tusks.
- Not until my interview with Dr. Hwang were other possibilities opened to me.
- A number of students in the seminar was aware of the importance of joining the discussion.

- d. Batik cloth from Bali, blue and white ceramics from Delft, and a bocce ball from Turin has made Angelie's room the talk of the dorm.
 - e. The board of directors, ignoring the wishes of the neighborhood, has voted to allow further development.
1. Measles is a contagious childhood disease.
 2. Adorning a shelf in the lab is a Vietnamese figurine, a set of Korean clay gods, and an American plastic village.
 3. The presence of certain bacteria in our bodies is one of the factors that determines our overall health.
 4. Sheila is the only one of the many applicants who has the ability to step into this job.
 5. Neither the explorer nor his companions was ever seen again.

22

Make pronouns and antecedents agree.

A pronoun is a word that substitutes for a noun. (See 46b.) Many pronouns have antecedents, nouns or pronouns to which they refer. A pronoun and its antecedent agree when they are both singular or both plural.

SINGULAR Dr. Ava Berto finished *her* rounds.

PLURAL The hospital *interns* finished *their* rounds.



MULTILINGUAL The pronouns *he*, *his*, *she*, *her*, *it*, and *its* must agree in gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter) with their antecedents, not with the words they modify.

Steve visited *his* [not *her*] sister in Seattle.

22a Do not use plural pronouns to refer to singular antecedents.

Writers are frequently tempted to use plural pronouns to refer to two kinds of singular antecedents: indefinite pronouns and generic nouns.

Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to nonspecific persons or things. Even though some of the following indefinite pronouns may seem to have plural meanings, treat them as singular in formal English.

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

 Everyone performs at *his or her* [not *their*] own fitness level.

When a plural pronoun refers mistakenly to a singular indefinite pronoun, you can usually choose one of three options for revision:

1. Replace the plural pronoun with *he or she* (or *his or her*).
2. Make the antecedent plural.
3. Rewrite the sentence so that no problem of agreement exists.

- ▶ When **someone** travels outside the United States for the first time, ~~they need~~ ^{*he or she needs*} to apply for a passport.

- ▶ When ~~someone travels~~ ^{*people travel*} outside the United States for the first time, ~~they need~~ to apply for a passport.

- ▶ ^{*Anyone who*} ~~When someone~~ travels outside the United States for the first time, ~~they need~~ ^{*needs*} to apply for a passport.

Because the *he or she* construction is wordy, often the second or third revision strategy is more effective. Using *he* (or *his*) to refer to persons of either sex, while less wordy, is considered sexist, as is using *she* (or *her*) for all persons. Some writers alternate male and female pronouns throughout a text, but the result is often awkward. See 17e and the chart on page 210 for strategies that avoid sexist usage.

NOTE: If you change a pronoun from singular to plural (or vice versa), check to be sure that the verb agrees with the new pronoun (see 21e).

Generic nouns

A generic noun represents a typical member of a group, such as a typical student, or any member of a group, such as any lawyer. Although generic nouns may seem to have plural meanings, they are singular.

Every *runner* must train rigorously if *he or she* wants [not *they* want] to excel.

When a plural pronoun refers mistakenly to a generic noun, you will usually have the same three revision options as mentioned on page 208 for indefinite pronouns.

- ▶ A medical student must study hard if *he or she* wants ~~they want~~ to succeed.
- ▶ *Medical students* ~~A medical student~~ must study hard if they want to succeed.
- ▶ A medical student must study hard if ~~they want~~ to succeed.

22b Treat collective nouns as singular unless the meaning is clearly plural.

Collective nouns such as *jury*, *committee*, *audience*, *crowd*, *class*, *troop*, *family*, *team*, and *couple* name a group. Ordinarily the group functions as a unit, so the noun should be treated as singular; if the members of the group function as individuals, however, the noun should be treated as plural. (See also 21f.)

AS A UNIT

The *committee* granted *its* permission to build.

AS INDIVIDUALS

The *committee* put *their* signatures on the document.

When treating a collective noun as plural, many writers prefer to add a clearly plural antecedent such as *members* to the

Choosing a revision strategy that avoids sexist language

Because many readers object to sexist language, avoid using *he*, *him*, and *his* (or *she*, *her*, and *hers*) to refer to both men and women. Also try to avoid the wordy expressions *he or she* and *his or her*. More graceful alternatives are usually possible.

Use an occasional *he or she* (or *his or her*).

- ▶ In our office, everyone works at ^{his or her} ~~their~~ own pace.

Make the antecedent plural.

- ▶ ^{Employees} ~~An employee~~ on extended disability leave may continue their life insurance.

Recast the sentence.

- ▶ The amount of vacation time a federal worker may accrue depends on ~~their~~ length of service.
- ▶ ^A ~~If a child is~~ born to parents who are both bipolar, ^{has} ~~they have~~ a high chance of being bipolar.
- ▶ In his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin suggests that anyone can achieve success ^{by living} ~~as long as they live~~ a virtuous life and ^{working} ~~work~~ hard.

sentence: *The members of the committee put their signatures on the document.*

- ▶ Defense attorney Clarence Darrow surprisingly urged the jury to find his client, John Scopes, guilty so that he could appeal the case to a higher court. The jury complied, returning ^{its} ~~their~~ verdict in only nine minutes.

There is no reason to draw attention to the individual members of the jury, so *jury* should be treated as singular.

22c Treat most compound antecedents joined with *and* as plural.

In 1987, *Reagan and Gorbachev* held a summit where *they* signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

22d With compound antecedents joined with *or* or *nor* (or with *either . . . or* or *neither . . . nor*), make the pronoun agree with the nearer antecedent.

Either *Bruce* or *Tom* should receive first prize for *his* poem.

Neither the *mouse* nor the *rats* could find *their* way through the maze.

NOTE: If one of the antecedents is singular and the other plural, as in the second example, put the plural one last to avoid awkwardness.

EXCEPTION: If one antecedent is male and the other female, do not follow the traditional rule. The sentence *Either Bruce or Elizabeth should receive first prize for her short story* makes no sense. The best solution is to recast the sentence: *The prize for best short story should go to either Bruce or Elizabeth.*

EXERCISE 22–1 Edit the following sentences to eliminate problems with pronoun-antecedent agreement. Most of the sentences can be revised in more than one way, so experiment before choosing a solution. If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

Recruiters

~~The recruiter~~ may tell the truth, but there is much that they

choose not to tell.

- Every presidential candidate must appeal to a wide variety of ethnic and social groups if they want to win the election.
- David lent his motorcycle to someone who allowed their friend to use it.

- c. The aerobics teacher motioned for everyone to move their arms in wide, slow circles.
 - d. The parade committee was unanimous in its decision to allow all groups and organizations to join the festivities.
 - e. The applicant should be bilingual if they want to qualify for this position.
1. If a driver refuses to take a blood or breath test, he or she will have their licenses suspended for six months.
 2. Why should anyone learn a second language? One reason is to sharpen their minds.
 3. The Department of Education issued guidelines for school security. They were trying to anticipate problems and avert disaster.
 4. The logger in the Northwest relies on the old forest growth for their living.
 5. If anyone notices any suspicious activity, they should report it to the police.

EXERCISE 22–2 Edit the following paragraph to eliminate problems with pronoun-antecedent agreement or sexist language.

A common practice in businesses is to put each employee in their own cubicle. A typical cubicle resembles an office, but their walls don't reach the ceiling. Many office managers feel that a cubicle floor plan has its advantages. Cubicles make a large area feel spacious. In addition, they can be moved around so that each new employee can be accommodated in his own work area. Of course, the cubicle model also has problems. The typical employee is not as happy with a cubicle as they would be with a traditional office. Also, productivity can suffer. Neither a manager nor a frontline worker can ordinarily do their best work in a cubicle because of noise and lack of privacy. Each worker can hear his neighbors tapping on computer keyboards, making telephone calls, and muttering under their breath.

23

Make pronoun references clear.

Pronouns substitute for nouns; they are a kind of shorthand. In a sentence like *After Andrew intercepted the ball, he kicked it as hard as he could*, the pronouns *he* and *it* substitute for the nouns *Andrew* and *ball*. The word a pronoun refers to is called its *antecedent*.

23a Avoid ambiguous or remote pronoun reference.

Ambiguous pronoun reference occurs when a pronoun could refer to two possible antecedents.

- The pitcher broke when Gloria set it*
 ▶ When Gloria set the pitcher on the glass-topped table, ~~it~~ broke.

- "You have*
 ▶ Tom told James, ~~that he had~~ won the lottery."

What broke — the pitcher or the table? Who won the lottery — Tom or James? The revisions eliminate the ambiguity.

Remote pronoun reference occurs when a pronoun is too far away from its antecedent for easy reading.

- ▶ After the court ordered my ex-husband to pay child support, he refused. Approximately eight months later, we were back in court. This time the judge ordered him to make payments directly to the Support and Collections Unit, which would in turn pay me. For the first six months, I received regular payments, but then they stopped. Again *my ex-husband* ~~he~~ was summoned to appear in court; he did not respond.

The pronoun *he* was too distant from its antecedent, *ex-husband*, which appeared several sentences earlier.

23b Generally, avoid broad reference of *this, that, which, and it*.

For clarity, the pronouns *this, that, which, and it* should ordinarily refer to specific antecedents rather than to whole ideas or sentences. When a pronoun's reference is needlessly broad, either replace the pronoun with a noun or supply an antecedent to which the pronoun clearly refers.

- ▶ By advertising on television, pharmaceutical companies gain

exposure for their prescription drugs. Patients respond to

the ads

this by requesting drugs they might not need.

For clarity, the writer substituted the noun *ads* for the pronoun *this*, which referred broadly to the idea expressed in the preceding sentence.

- ▶ Romeo and Juliet were both too young to have acquired

a fact

much wisdom, *and* that accounts for their rash actions.

The writer added an antecedent (*fact*) that the pronoun *that* clearly refers to.

23c Do not use a pronoun to refer to an implied antecedent.

A pronoun should refer to a specific antecedent, not to a word that is implied but not present in the sentence.

- ▶ After braiding Ann's hair, Sue decorated *them* with ribbons.

the braids

The pronoun *them* referred to Ann's braids (implied by the term *braiding*), but the word *braids* did not appear in the sentence.

Modifiers, such as possessives, cannot serve as antecedents. A modifier may strongly imply the noun that a pronoun might logically refer to, but it is not itself that noun.

- ▶ In *Jamaica Kincaid's* "Girl," *she* describes the advice a

Jamaica Kincaid

mother gives her daughter, including the mysterious

warning not to be "the kind of woman who the baker won't

let near the bread" (454).

Using the possessive form of an author's name to introduce a source leads to a problem later in this sentence: The pronoun *she* cannot refer logically to a possessive modifier (*Jamaica Kincaid's*). The revision substitutes the noun *Jamaica Kincaid* for the pronoun *she*, thereby eliminating the problem.

23d Avoid the indefinite use of *they, it, and you*.

Do not use the pronoun *they* to refer indefinitely to persons who have not been specifically mentioned. *They* should always refer to a specific antecedent.

- ▶ In June, ^{the board} ~~they~~ announced that parents would have to pay a fee for their children to participate in sports and music programs starting in September.

The word *it* should not be used indefinitely in constructions such as *It is said on television . . .* or *In the article, it says that. . .*

- ▶ ^{The} ~~In the~~ encyclopedia ~~it~~ states that male moths can smell female moths from several miles away.

The pronoun *you* is appropriate only when the writer is addressing the reader directly: *Once you have kneaded the dough, let it rise in a warm place.* Except in informal contexts, however, *you* should not be used to mean “anyone in general.” Use a noun instead.

- ▶ Ms. Pickersgill’s *Guide to Etiquette* stipulates that ^{a guest} ~~you~~ should not arrive at a party too early or leave too late.

23e To refer to persons, use *who, whom, or whose*, not *which* or *that*.

In most contexts, use *who*, *whom*, or *whose* to refer to persons, *which* or *that* to refer to animals or things. *Which* is reserved only for animals or things, so it is impolite to use it to refer to persons.

- ▶ All thirty-two women in the study, half of ^{whom} ~~which~~ were unemployed for more than six months, reported higher self-esteem after job training.

Although *that* is sometimes used to refer to persons, many readers will find such references dehumanizing. It is more polite to use a form of *who* — a word reserved only for people.

- During the two-day festival El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), Mexican families celebrate loved ones ^{who} ~~that~~ have died.

EXERCISE 23–1 Edit the following sentences to correct errors in pronoun reference. In some cases, you will need to decide on an antecedent that the pronoun might logically refer to. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

Although Apple makes the most widely recognized MP3

player, other companies have gained a share of the market.

The competition

~~This~~ has kept prices from skyrocketing.

- They say that engineering students should have hands-on experience with dismantling and reassembling machines.
 - She had decorated her living room with posters from chamber music festivals. This led her date to believe that she was interested in classical music. Actually she preferred rock.
 - In my high school, you didn't need to get all A's to be considered a success; you just needed to work to your ability.
 - Marianne told Jenny that she was worried about her mother's illness.
 - Though Lewis cried for several minutes after scraping his knee, eventually it subsided.
- Our German conversation group is made up of six people, three of which I had never met before.
 - Many people believe that the polygraph test is highly reliable if you employ a licensed examiner.
 - Parent involvement is high at Mission San Jose High School. They participate in many committees and activities that affect all aspects of school life.
 - Because of Paul Robeson's outspoken attitude toward fascism, he was labeled a Communist.
 - In the report, it points out that the bald eagle, after several decades of protection, was removed from the endangered species list in 1997.

EXERCISE 23–2 Edit the following passage to correct errors in pronoun reference. In some cases, you will need to decide on an antecedent that the pronoun might logically refer to.

Since the Internet's inception in the 1980s, it has grown to be one of the largest communications forums in the world. The Internet was created by a team of academics who were building on a platform that government scientists had started developing in the 1950s. They initially viewed it as a noncommercial enterprise that would serve only the needs of the academic and technical communities. But with the introduction of user-friendly browser technology in the 1990s, it expanded tremendously. By the late 1990s, many businesses were connecting to the Internet with high-speed broadband and fiber-optic connections, which is also true of many home users today. Accessing information, shopping, and communicating are easier than ever before. This, however, can lead to some possible drawbacks. You can be bombarded with spam and pop-up ads or attacked by harmful viruses and worms. They say that the best way to protect home computers from harm is to keep antivirus protection programs up-to-date and to shut them down when not in use.

24

Distinguish between pronouns such as *I* and *me*.

The personal pronouns in the following chart change what is known as *case form* according to their grammatical function in a sentence. Pronouns functioning as subjects or subject complements appear in the *subjective* case; those functioning as objects appear in the *objective* case; and those showing ownership appear in the *possessive* case.

	SUBJECTIVE CASE	OBJECTIVE CASE	POSSESSIVE CASE
SINGULAR	I	me	my
	you	you	your
	he/she/it	him/her/it	his/her/its
PLURAL	we	us	our
	you	you	your
	they	them	their

Pronouns in the subjective and objective cases are frequently confused. Most of the rules in this section specify when to use one or the other of these cases (*I* or *me*, *he* or *him*, and so on). Section 24g explains a special use of pronouns and nouns in the possessive case.

24a Use the subjective case (*I, you, he, she, it, we, they*) for subjects and subject complements.

When personal pronouns are used as subjects, ordinarily your ear will tell you the correct pronoun. Problems sometimes arise, however, with compound word groups containing a pronoun, so it is not always safe to trust your ear.

- Joel ran away from home because his stepfather and ^{he}~~him~~ had quarreled.

His stepfather and he is the subject of the verb *had quarreled*. If we strip away the words *his stepfather and*, the correct pronoun becomes clear: *he had quarreled* (not *him had quarreled*).

When a pronoun is used as a subject complement (a word following a linking verb), your ear may mislead you, since the incorrect form is frequently heard in casual speech. (See “subject complement,” 47b.)

- During the Lindbergh trial, Bruno Hauptmann repeatedly denied that the kidnapper was ^{he.}~~him.~~

If *kidnapper was he* seems too stilted, rewrite the sentence: *During the Lindbergh trial, Bruno Hauptmann repeatedly denied that he was the kidnapper.*

24b Use the objective case (*me, you, him, her, it, us, them*) for all objects.

When a personal pronoun is used as a direct object, an indirect object, or the object of a preposition, ordinarily your ear will lead you to the correct pronoun. When an object is compound, however, you may occasionally become confused.

- Janice was indignant when she realized that the salesclerk
was insulting her mother and ^{her.} ~~she.~~

Her mother and her is the direct object of the verb *was insulting*. Strip away the words *her mother and* to hear the correct pronoun: *was insulting her* (not *was insulting she*).

- The most traumatic experience for her father and ^{me} ~~I~~ occurred
long after her operation.

Her father and me is the object of the preposition *for*. Strip away the words *her father and* to test for the correct pronoun: *for me* (not *for I*).

When in doubt about the correct pronoun, some writers try to avoid making the choice by using a reflexive pronoun such as *myself*. Using a reflexive pronoun in such situations is nonstandard.

- The Indian cab driver gave my cousin and ^{me} ~~myself~~ some good
tips on traveling in New Delhi.

My cousin and me is the indirect object of the verb *gave*. For correct uses of *myself*, see the glossary of usage.

24c Put an appositive and the word to which it refers in the same case.

Appositives are noun phrases that rename nouns or pronouns. A pronoun used as an appositive has the same function (usually subject or object) as the word(s) it renames.

- The chief strategists, Dr. Bell and ^{I,} ~~me,~~ could not agree on a plan.

The appositive *Dr. Bell and I* renames the subject, *strategists*. Test: *I could not agree* (not *me could not agree*).

- The reporter interviewed only two witnesses, the bicyclist
and ^{me.} ~~I.~~

The appositive *the bicyclist and me* renames the direct object, *witnesses*. Test: *interviewed me* (not *interviewed I*).

24d Following *than* or *as*, choose the pronoun that expresses your meaning.

When a comparison begins with *than* or *as*, your choice of a pronoun will depend on your meaning. To test for the correct pronoun, mentally complete the sentence: *My roommate likes football more than I [do]*.

- ▶ In our position paper supporting nationalized health care

in the United States, we argued that Canadians are much

better off than ^{*we.*}
~~us.~~

We is the subject of the verb *are*, which is understood: *Canadians are much better off than we [are]*. If the correct English seems too formal, you can always add the verb.

- ▶ We respected no other candidate for the city council as much

^{*her.*}
as ~~she.~~

This sentence means that we respected no other candidate as much as *we respected her*. *Her* is the direct object of the understood verb *respected*.

24e For *we* or *us* before a noun, choose the pronoun that would be appropriate if the noun were omitted.

- ▶ ^{*We*}
~~Us~~ tenants would rather fight than move.

- ▶ Management is shortchanging ^{*us*}
~~we~~ tenants.

No one would say *Us would rather fight than move* or *Management is shortchanging we*.

24f Use the objective case for subjects and objects of infinitives.

An infinitive is the word *to* followed by the base form of a verb. (See 48b.) Subjects of infinitives are an exception to the rule that subjects must be in the subjective case. Whenever an infinitive has

a subject, it must be in the objective case. Objects of infinitives also are in the objective case.

- ▶ Sue asked John and ^{me} I to drive the senator and ^{her} she to the airport.

John and me is the subject of the infinitive *to drive*; *senator and her* is the direct object of the infinitive.

24g Use the possessive case to modify a gerund.

A pronoun that modifies a gerund or a gerund phrase should be in the possessive case (*my*, *our*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *their*). A gerund is a verb form ending in *-ing* that functions as a noun. Gerunds frequently appear in phrases; when they do, the whole gerund phrase functions as a noun. (See 48b.)

- ▶ The chances of ^{your} you being hit by lightning are about two million to one.

Your modifies the gerund phrase *being hit by lightning*.

Nouns as well as pronouns may modify gerunds. To form the possessive case of a noun, use an apostrophe and an *-s* (*victim's*) or just an apostrophe (*victims'*). (See 36a.)

- ▶ The old order in France paid a high price for the ^{aristocracy's} aristocracy exploiting the lower classes.

The possessive noun *aristocracy's* modifies the gerund phrase *exploiting the lower classes*.

EXERCISE 24-1 Edit the following sentences to eliminate errors in pronoun case. If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

Papa chops wood for neighbors much younger than ^{he.} him.

- a. Rick applied for the job even though he heard that other candidates were more experienced than he.

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> Grammar > 24-3 and 24-4

> 25-3 and 25-4 (pronoun review)

- b. The volleyball team could not believe that the coach was she.
 - c. She appreciated him telling the truth in such a difficult situation.
 - d. The director has asked you and I to draft a proposal for a new recycling plan.
 - e. Five close friends and myself rented a station wagon, packed it with food, and drove two hundred miles to Mardi Gras.
1. The squawk of the brass horns nearly overwhelmed us oboe and bassoon players.
 2. Ushio, the last rock climber up the wall, tossed Teri and she the remaining pitons and carabiners.
 3. The programmer realized that her and the interface designers were creating an entirely new Web application.
 4. My desire to understand classical music was aided by me working as an usher at Symphony Hall.
 5. The shower of sinking bricks caused he and his diving partner to race away from the collapsing seawall.

EXERCISE 24–2 In the following paragraph, choose the correct pronoun in each set of parentheses.

We may blame television for the number of products based on characters in children's TV shows — from Big Bird to SpongeBob — but in fact merchandising that capitalizes on a character's popularity started long before television. Raggedy Ann began as a child's rag doll, and a few years later books about (she / her) and her brother, Raggedy Andy, were published. A cartoonist named Johnny Gruelle painted a cloth face on a family doll and applied for a patent in 1915. Later Gruelle began writing and illustrating stories about Raggedy Ann, and in 1918 (he / him) and a publisher teamed up to publish the books and sell the dolls. He was not the only one to try to sell products linked to children's stories. Beatrix Potter published the first of many Peter Rabbit picture books in 1902, and no one was better than (she / her) at making a living from spin-offs. After Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny became popular, Potter began putting pictures of (they / them) and their little animal friends on merchandise. Potter had fans all over the world, and she understood (them / their) wanting to see Peter Rabbit not only in books but also on teapots and plates and lamps and other furnishings for the nursery. Potter and Gruelle, like countless others before and since, knew that entertaining children could be a profitable business.

25

Distinguish between *who* and *whom*.

The choice between *who* and *whom* (or *whoever* and *whomever*) occurs primarily in subordinate clauses and in questions. *Who* and *whoever*, subjective-case pronouns, are used for subjects and subject complements. *Whom* and *whomever*, objective-case pronouns, are used for objects. (See 25a and 25b.)

An exception to this general rule occurs when the pronoun functions as the subject of an infinitive (see 25c). See also 24f.

25a In subordinate clauses, use *who* and *whoever* for subjects and subject complements, *whom* and *whomever* for all objects.

When *who* and *whom* (or *whoever* and *whomever*) introduce subordinate clauses, their case is determined by their function *within the clause they introduce*.

In the following two examples, the pronouns *who* and *whoever* function as the subjects of the clauses they introduce.

- ▶ First prize goes to the runner ^{who} ~~whom~~ earns the most points.

The subordinate clause is *who earns the most points*. The verb of the clause is *earns*, and its subject is *who*.

- ▶ Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* should be read by ^{whoever} ~~whomever~~ is interested in the effects of racial prejudice on children.

The writer selected the pronoun *whomever*, thinking that it was the object of the preposition *by*. However, the object of the preposition is the entire subordinate clause *whoever is interested in the effects of racial prejudice on children*. The verb of the clause is *is*, and the subject of the verb is *whoever*.

When functioning as an object in a subordinate clause, *whom* (or *whomever*) also appears out of order, before the subject and

verb. To choose the correct pronoun, you can mentally restructure the clause.

- ▶ You will work with our senior traders, ^{whom}~~who~~ you will meet later.

The subordinate clause is *whom you will meet later*. The subject of the clause is *you*, and the verb is *will meet*. *Whom* is the direct object of the verb. The correct choice becomes clear if you mentally restructure the clause: *you will meet whom*.

When functioning as the object of a preposition in a subordinate clause, *whom* is often separated from its preposition.

- ▶ The tutor ^{whom}~~who~~ I was assigned to was very supportive.

Whom is the object of the preposition *to*. In this sentence, the writer might choose to drop *whom*: *The tutor I was assigned to was very supportive*.

NOTE: Inserted expressions such as *they know*, *I think*, and *she says* should be ignored in determining whether to use *who* or *whom*.

- ▶ The speech pathologist reported a particularly difficult session with a stroke patient ^{who}~~whom~~ she knew was suffering from aphasia.

Who is the subject of *was suffering*, not the object of *knew*.

25b In questions, use *who* and *whoever* for subjects, *whom* and *whomever* for all objects.

When *who* and *whom* (or *whoever* and *whomever*) are used to open questions, their case is determined by their function within the question. In the following example, *who* functions as the subject of the question.

- ▶ ^{Who}~~Whom~~ was responsible for creating that computer virus?

Who is the subject of the verb *was*.

When *whom* functions as the object of a verb or the object of a preposition in a question, it appears out of normal order. To choose the correct pronoun, you can mentally restructure the question.

Whom

- ▶ **Who** did the Democratic Party nominate in 2008?

Whom is the direct object of the verb *did nominate*. This becomes clear if you restructure the question: *The Democratic Party did nominate whom in 2008?*

25c Use *whom* for subjects or objects of infinitives.

An infinitive is the word *to* followed by the base form of a verb. (See 48b.) Subjects of infinitives are an exception to the rule that subjects must be in the subjective case. The subject of an infinitive must be in the objective case. Objects of infinitives also are in the objective case.

- ▶ When it comes to money, I know *whom* ~~who~~ to believe.

The infinitive phrase *whom to believe* is the direct object of the verb *know*, and *whom* is the subject of the infinitive *to believe*.

NOTE: In spoken English, *who* is frequently used when the correct *whom* sounds too stuffy. Even educated speakers are likely to say *Who* [not *Whom*] *did Senator Boxer replace?* Although some readers will accept such constructions in informal written English, it is safer to use *whom* in formal English.

EXERCISE 25–1 Edit the following sentences to eliminate errors in the use of *who* and *whom* (or *whoever* and *whomever*). If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

What is the address of the artist *whom* ~~who~~ Antonio hired?

- The roundtable featured scholars who I had never heard of.
- Arriving late for rehearsal, we had no idea who was supposed to dance with whom.
- Whom did you support for student government president?
- Daniel always gives a holiday donation to whomever needs it.
- So many singers came to the audition that Natalia had trouble deciding who to select for the choir.

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> Grammar > 25–2

> 25–3 and 25–4 (pronoun review)

1. My cousin Sylvie, who I am teaching to fly a kite, watches us every time we compete.
2. Who decided to research the history of Hungarians in New Brunswick?
3. According to Greek myth, the Sphinx devoured those who could not answer her riddles.
4. The people who ordered their medications from Canada were retirees whom don't have health insurance.
5. Who did the committee select?

26

Choose adjectives and adverbs with care.

Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns. They usually come before the word they modify; occasionally they function as complements following the word they modify. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. (See 46d and 46e.)

Many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to adjectives (*normal, normally; smooth, smoothly*). But don't assume that all words ending in *-ly* are adverbs or that all adverbs end in *-ly*. Some adjectives end in *-ly* (*lovely, friendly*), and some adverbs don't (*always, here, there*). When in doubt, consult a dictionary.



MULTILINGUAL Placement of adjectives and adverbs can be a tricky matter for multilingual writers. See 30f and 30h.

26a Use adjectives to modify nouns.

Adjectives ordinarily precede the nouns they modify. But they can also function as subject complements or object complements, following the nouns they modify.



MULTILINGUAL In English, adjectives are not pluralized to agree with the words they modify: *The red [not reds] roses were a surprise.*

Subject complements

A subject complement follows a linking verb and completes the meaning of the subject. (See 47b.) When an adjective functions as a subject complement, it describes the subject.

Justice is blind.

Problems can arise with verbs such as *smell*, *taste*, *look*, and *feel*, which sometimes, but not always, function as linking verbs. If the word following one of these verbs describes the subject, use an adjective; if the word following the verb modifies the verb, use an adverb.

ADJECTIVE The detective looked *cautious*.

ADVERB The detective looked *cautiously* for fingerprints.

The adjective *cautious* describes the detective; the adverb *cautiously* modifies the verb *looked*.

Linking verbs suggest states of being, not actions. Notice, for example, the different meanings of *looked* in the preceding examples. To look cautious suggests the state of being cautious; to look cautiously is to perform an action in a cautious way.

- ▶ The lilacs in our backyard smell especially ^{sweet} ~~sweetly~~ this year.

The verb *smell* suggests a state of being, not an action. Therefore, it should be followed by an adjective, not an adverb.

- ▶ The drawings looked ^{good} ~~well~~ after the architect made a few changes.

The verb *looked* is a linking verb suggesting a state of being, not an action. The adjective *good* is appropriate following the linking verb to describe *drawings*. (See also 26c.)

Object complements

An object complement follows a direct object and completes its meaning. (See 47b.) When an adjective functions as an object complement, it describes the direct object.

Sorrow makes *us* ^{wise}.

Object complements occur with verbs such as *call*, *consider*, *create*, *find*, *keep*, and *make*. When a modifier follows the direct object of one of these verbs, use an adjective to describe the direct object; use an adverb to modify the verb.

ADJECTIVE The referee called the plays *perfect*.

ADVERB The referee called the plays *perfectly*.

The first sentence means that the referee considered the plays to be perfect; the second means that the referee did an excellent job of calling the plays.

26b Use adverbs to modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

When adverbs modify verbs (or verbals), they nearly always answer the question When? Where? How? Why? Under what conditions? How often? or To what degree? When adverbs modify adjectives or other adverbs, they usually qualify or intensify the meaning of the word they modify. (See 46e.)

Adjectives are often used incorrectly in place of adverbs in casual or nonstandard speech.

- ▶ The travel arrangement worked out ~~perfect~~ ^{perfectly} for everyone.
- ▶ The manager must see that the office runs ~~smooth~~ ^{smoothly} and ~~efficient~~ ^{efficiently}.

The adverb *perfectly* modifies the verb *worked out*; the adverbs *smoothly* and *efficiently* modify the verb *runs*.

- ▶ The chance of recovering any property lost in the fire looks ~~real~~ ^{really} slim.

Only adverbs can modify adjectives or other adverbs. *Really* intensifies the meaning of the adjective *slim*.

26c Distinguish between *good* and *well*, *bad* and *badly*.

Good is an adjective (*good performance*). *Well* is an adverb when it modifies a verb (*speak well*). The use of the adjective *good* in place of the adverb *well* to modify a verb is nonstandard and especially common in casual speech.

- We were glad that Sanya had done ^{well} good on the CPA exam.

The adverb *well* modifies the verb *had done*.

Confusion can arise because *well* is an adjective when it modifies a noun or pronoun and means “healthy” or “satisfactory” (*The babies were well and warm*).

- Adrienne did not feel ^{well,} good, but she made her presentation anyway.

As an adjective following the linking verb *did feel*, *well* describes Adrienne’s health.

Bad is always an adjective and should be used to describe a noun; *badly* is always an adverb and should be used to modify a verb. The adverb *badly* is often used inappropriately to describe a noun, especially following a linking verb.

- The sisters felt ^{bad} badly when they realized they had left their brother out of the planning.

The adjective *bad* is used after the linking verb *felt* to describe the noun *sisters*.

26d Use comparatives and superlatives with care.

Most adjectives and adverbs have three forms: the positive, the comparative, and the superlative.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
soft	softer	softest
fast	faster	fastest
careful	more careful	most careful
bad	worse	worst
good	better	best

Comparative versus superlative

Use the comparative to compare two things, the superlative to compare three or more.

- ▶ Which of these two low-carb drinks is ^{better?} ~~best?~~ [^]
- ▶ Though Shaw and Jackson are impressive, Zhao is the ^{most} ~~more~~ [^] qualified of the three candidates running for mayor.

Forming comparatives and superlatives

To form comparatives and superlatives of most one- and two-syllable adjectives, use the endings *-er* and *-est*: *smooth*, *smoother*, *smoothest*; *easy*, *easier*, *easiest*. With longer adjectives, use *more* and *most* (or *less* and *least* for downward comparisons): *exciting*, *more exciting*, *most exciting*; *helpful*, *less helpful*, *least helpful*.

Some one-syllable adverbs take the endings *-er* and *-est* (*fast*, *faster*, *fastest*), but longer adverbs and all of those ending in *-ly* form the comparative and superlative with *more* and *most* (or *less* and *least*).

The comparative and superlative forms of some adjectives and adverbs are irregular: *good*, *better*, *best*; *well*, *better*, *best*; *bad*, *worse*, *worst*; *badly*, *worse*, *worst*.

- ▶ The Kirov is the ^{most talented} ~~talentedest~~ [^] ballet company we have seen.
- ▶ According to our projections, sales at local businesses will be ^{worse} ~~worser~~ [^] than those at the chain stores this winter.

Double comparatives or superlatives

Do not use double comparatives or superlatives. When you have added *-er* or *-est* to an adjective or adverb, do not also use *more* or *most* (or *less* or *least*).

- ▶ Of all her family, Julia is the ~~most~~ ^{most} happiest about the move.
- ▶ All the polls indicated that Gore was more ^{likely} ~~likelier~~ [^] to win than Bush.

Absolute concepts

Avoid expressions such as *more straight*, *less perfect*, *very round*, and *most unique*. Either something is unique or it isn't. It is illogical to suggest that absolute concepts come in degrees.

- ▶ That is the most ^{unusual} ~~unique~~ wedding gown I have ever seen.
- ▶ The painting would have been even more ^{valuable} ~~priceless~~ had it been signed.

26e Avoid double negatives.

Standard English allows two negatives only if a positive meaning is intended: *The orchestra was not unhappy with its performance* (meaning that the orchestra was happy). Using a double negative to emphasize a negative meaning is nonstandard.

Negative modifiers such as *never*, *no*, and *not* should not be paired with other negative modifiers or with negative words such as *neither*, *none*, *no one*, *nobody*, and *nothing*.

- ▶ The county is not doing ^{anything} ~~nothing~~ to see that the trash is picked up.

The double negative *not . . . nothing* is nonstandard.

The modifiers *hardly*, *barely*, and *scarcely* are considered negatives in standard English, so they should not be used with negatives such as *not*, *no one*, or *never*.

- ▶ Maxine is so weak that she ^{can} ~~can't~~ hardly climb stairs.

EXERCISE 26-1 Edit the following sentences to eliminate errors in the use of adjectives and adverbs. If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

We weren't surprised by how ^{well} ~~good~~ the sidecar racing team flowed through the tricky course.

- Did you do good on last week's chemistry exam?
- With the budget deadline approaching, our office hasn't hardly had time to handle routine correspondence.
- Some flowers smell surprisingly bad.

- d. The customer complained that he hadn't been treated nice.
- e. Of all my relatives, Uncle Roberto is the most cleverest.
1. When you answer the phone, speak clear and courteous.
2. Who was more upset about the loss? Was it the coach or the quarterback or the owner of the team?
3. To a novice skateboarder, even the basic ollie seems real challenging.
4. After checking how bad I had been hurt, my sister dialed 911.
5. If the college's Web page had been updated more regular, students would have learned about the new course offerings.

EXERCISE 26–2 Edit the following passage to eliminate errors in the use of adjectives and adverbs.

Doctors recommend that to give skin the most fullest protection from ultraviolet rays, people should use plenty of sunscreen, limit sun exposure, and wear protective clothing. The commonest sunscreens today are known as “broad spectrum” because they block out both UVA and UVB rays. These lotions don't feel any differently on the skin from the old UVA-only types, but they work best at preventing premature aging and skin cancer. Many sunscreens claim to be waterproof, but they won't hardly provide adequate coverage after extended periods of swimming or perspiring. To protect good, even waterproof sunscreens should be reapplied liberal and often. All areas of exposed skin, including ears, backs of hands, and tops of feet, need to be coated good to avoid burning or damage. Some people's skin reacts bad to PABA, or para-aminobenzoic acid, so PABA-free (hypoallergenic) sunscreens are widely available. In addition to recommending sunscreen, doctors almost unanimously agree that people should stay out of the sun when rays are the most strongest—between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.—and should limit time in the sun. They also suggest that people wear long-sleeved shirts, broad-brimmed hats, and long pants whenever possible.

27

Choose appropriate verb forms, tenses, and moods in standard English.

In speech, some people use verb forms and tenses that match a home dialect or variety of English. In writing, use standard English verb forms unless you are quoting nonstandard speech or using alternative forms for literary effect. (See 17c.)

Except for the verb *be*, all verbs in English have five forms. The following list shows the five forms and provides a sample sentence in which each might appear.

BASE FORM	Usually I (<i>walk, ride</i>).
PAST TENSE	Yesterday I (<i>walked, rode</i>).
PAST PARTICIPLE	I have (<i>walked, ridden</i>) many times before.
PRESENT PARTICIPLE	I am (<i>walking, riding</i>) right now.
-S FORM	He/she/it (<i>walks, rides</i>) regularly.

The verb *be* has eight forms instead of the usual five: *be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*.

27a Choose standard English forms of irregular verbs.

For all regular verbs, the past-tense and past-participle forms are the same (ending in *-ed* or *-d*), so there is no danger of confusion. This is not true, however, for irregular verbs, such as the following.

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
go	went	gone
break	broke	broken
fly	flew	flown
sing	sang	sung

The past-tense form always occurs alone, without a helping verb. It expresses action that occurred entirely in the past: *I rode to work yesterday. I walked to work last Tuesday.* The past participle is used with a helping verb. It forms the perfect tenses with *has, have, or had*; it forms the passive voice with *be, am, is, are, was, were, being, or been*. (See 46c for a complete list of helping verbs and 27f for a survey of tenses.)

PAST TENSE	Last July, we <i>went</i> to Paris.
HELPING VERB + PAST PARTICIPLE	We <i>have gone</i> to Paris twice.

The list of common irregular verbs beginning on the next page will help you distinguish between the past tense and the past participle. Choose the past-participle form if the verb in your sentence

requires a helping verb; choose the past-tense form if the verb does not require a helping verb. (See verb tenses in 27f.)

- ▶ Yesterday we ^{saw} ~~seen~~ a documentary about Isabel Allende.

The past-tense *saw* is required because there is no helping verb.

- ▶ The truck was apparently ^{stolen} ~~stole~~ while the driver ate lunch.

- ▶ By Friday, the stock market had ^{fallen} ~~fell~~ two hundred points.

Because of the helping verbs *was* and *had*, the past-participle forms are required: *was stolen*, *had fallen*.

Common irregular verbs

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
arise	arose	arisen
awake	awoke, awaked	awaked, awoke, awoken
be	was, were	been
beat	beat	beaten, beat
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bite	bit	bitten, bit
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
dive	dived, dove	dived
do	did	done

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
drag	dragged	dragged
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed, dreamt	dreamed, dreamt
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten, forgot
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten, got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang (execute)	hanged	hanged
hang (suspend)	hung	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay (put)	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lend	lent	lent
let (allow)	let	let
lie (recline)	lay	lain
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
prove	proved	proved, proven
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise (get up)	rose	risen

(continued)

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
send	sent	sent
set (place)	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shoot	shot	shot
shrink	shrank	shrunk
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit (be seated)	sat	sat
slay	slew	slain
sleep	slept	slept
speak	spoke	spoken
spin	spun	spun
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
sting	stung	stung
strike	struck	struck, stricken
swear	swore	sworn
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
throw	threw	thrown
wake	woke, waked	waked, woken
wear	wore	worn
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

27b Distinguish among the forms of *lie* and *lay*.

Writers and speakers frequently confuse the various forms of *lie* (meaning “to recline or rest on a surface”) and *lay* (meaning “to put or place something”). *Lie* is an intransitive verb; it does not

take a direct object: *The tax forms lie on the table.* The verb *lay* is transitive; it takes a direct object: *Please lay the tax forms on the table.* (See 47b.)

In addition to confusing the meaning of *lie* and *lay*, writers and speakers are often unfamiliar with the standard English forms of these verbs.

BASE FORM	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE	PRESENT PARTICIPLE
lie (“recline”)	lay	lain	lying
lay (“put”)	laid	laid	laying

- Sue was so exhausted that she ^{lay} ~~laid~~ down for a nap.

The past-tense form of *lie* (“to recline”) is *lay*.

- The patient had ^{lain} ~~laid~~ in an uncomfortable position all night.

The past-participle form of *lie* (“to recline”) is *lain*. If the correct English seems too stilted, recast the sentence: *The patient had been lying in an uncomfortable position all night.*

- The prosecutor ^{laid} ~~lay~~ the pistol on a table close to the jurors.

The past-tense form of *lay* (“to place”) is *laid*.

- Letters dating from the Civil War were ^{lying} ~~laying~~ in the corner of the chest.

The present participle of *lie* (“to rest on a surface”) is *lying*.

EXERCISE 27–1 Edit the following sentences to eliminate problems with irregular verbs. If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

The ranger ^{saw} ~~seen~~ the forest fire ten miles away.

- When I get the urge to exercise, I lay down until it passes.
- Grandmother had drove our new hybrid to the sunrise church service on Savage Mountain, so we were left with the station wagon.
- A pile of dirty rags was laying at the bottom of the stairs.

- d. How did the game know that the player had went from the room with the blue ogre to the hall where the gold was heaped?
- e. Abraham Lincoln took good care of his legal clients; the contracts he drew for the Illinois Central Railroad could never be broke.
1. The burglar must have gone immediately upstairs, grabbed what looked good, and took off.
2. Have you ever dreamed that you were falling from a cliff or flying through the air?
3. Tomás reached for the pen, signed the title page of his novel, and then laid the book on the table for the first customer in line.
4. In her junior year, Cindy run the 400-meter dash in 58.1 seconds.
5. Larry claimed that he had drank too much soda, but Esther suspected the truth.

27c Use -s (or -es) endings on present-tense verbs that have third-person singular subjects.

All singular nouns (*child*, *tree*) and the pronouns *he*, *she*, and *it* are third-person singular; indefinite pronouns such as *everyone* and *neither* are also third-person singular. When the subject of a sentence is third-person singular, its verb takes an -s or -es ending in the present tense. (See also 21.)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
FIRST PERSON	I know	we know
SECOND PERSON	you know	you know
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it knows child knows everyone knows	they know parents know

- My neighbor ^{drives}drive to Marco Island every weekend.
- Sulfur dioxide ^{turns}turn leaves yellow, ^{dissolves}dissolve marble, and ^{eats}eat away iron and steel.

The subjects *neighbor* and *sulfur dioxide* are third-person singular, so the verbs must end in -s.

TIP: Do not add the -s ending to the verb if the subject is not third-person singular. The writers of the following sentences, knowing they sometimes dropped -s endings from verbs, over-corrected by adding the endings where they don't belong.

- ▶ I prepares program specifications and logic diagrams for every installation.

The writer mistakenly concluded that the -s ending belongs on present-tense verbs used with *all* singular subjects, not just *third-person* singular subjects. The pronoun *I* is first-person singular, so its verb does not require the -s.

- ▶ The dirt floors requires continual sweeping.

The writer mistakenly thought that the verb needed an -s ending because of the plural subject. But the -s ending is used only on present-tense verbs with third-person *singular* subjects.

Has versus have

In the present tense, use *has* with third-person singular subjects; all other subjects require *have*.

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	have	we	have
SECOND PERSON	you	have	you	have
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it	has	they	have

- ▶ This respected musician almost always ^{has}have a message to convey in his work.

The subject *musician* is third-person singular, so the verb should be *has*.

- ▶ My law classes ^{have}has helped me understand contracts.

The subject of this sentence — *classes* — is third-person plural, so standard English requires *have*. *Has* is used only with third-person singular subjects.

Does versus do and doesn't versus don't

In the present tense, use *does* and *doesn't* with third-person singular subjects; all other subjects require *do* and *don't*.

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	do/don't	we	do/don't
SECOND PERSON	you	do/don't	you	do/don't
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it	does/doesn't	they	do/don't

- ▶ Grandfather really ^{doesn't} ~~don't~~ have a place to call home.

Grandfather is third-person singular, so the verb should be *doesn't*.

Am, is, and are; was and were

The verb *be* has three forms in the present tense (*am*, *is*, *are*) and two in the past tense (*was*, *were*).

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
FIRST PERSON	I	am/was	we	are/were
SECOND PERSON	you	are/were	you	are/were
THIRD PERSON	he/she/it	is/was	they	are/were

- ▶ Did you think you ^{were} ~~was~~ going to drown?

The subject *you* is second-person singular, so the verb should be *were*.

27d Do not omit -ed endings on verbs.

Speakers who do not fully pronounce *-ed* endings sometimes omit them unintentionally in writing. Leaving off *-ed* endings is common in many dialects and in informal speech even in standard English. In the following frequently used words and phrases, for example, the *-ed* ending is not always fully pronounced.

advised	developed	prejudiced	supposed to
asked	fixed	pronounced	used to
concerned	frightened	stereotyped	

When a verb is regular, both the past tense and the past participle are formed by adding *-ed* (or *-d*) to the base form of the verb.

Past tense

Use the ending *-ed* or *-d* to express the past tense of regular verbs. The past tense is used when the action occurred entirely in the past.

- ▶ Over the weekend, Ed ^{*fixed*} ~~fix~~ his brother's skateboard and tuned up his mother's 1991 Fiat.
- ▶ Last summer, my counselor ^{*advised*} ~~advise~~ me to ask my chemistry instructor for help.

Past participles

Past participles are used in three ways: (1) following *have*, *has*, or *had* to form one of the perfect tenses; (2) following *be*, *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *being*, or *been* to form the passive voice; and (3) as adjectives modifying nouns or pronouns. The perfect tenses are listed on page 244, and the passive voice is discussed in 8a. For a discussion of participles as adjectives, see 48b.

- ▶ Robin ^{*asked*} ~~ask~~ for more housing staff for next year.
Has asked is present perfect tense (*have* or *has* followed by a past participle).
- ▶ Though it is not a new phenomenon, domestic violence is ^{*publicized*} ~~publicize~~ now more than ever.
Is publicized is a verb in the passive voice (a form of *be* followed by a past participle).
- ▶ All kickboxing classes end in a cool-down period to stretch ^{*tightened*} ~~tighten~~ muscles.
The past participle *tightened* functions as an adjective modifying the noun *muscles*.

27e Do not omit needed verbs.

Although standard English allows some linking verbs and helping verbs to be contracted in informal contexts, it does not allow them to be omitted.

Linking verbs, used to link subjects to subject complements, are frequently a form of *be*: *be*, *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *being*, *been*. (See 47b.) Some of these forms may be contracted (*I'm*, *she's*, *we're*, *you're*, *they're*), but they should not be omitted altogether.

- ▶ When we ^{are} quiet in the evening, we can hear crickets in the woods.

Helping verbs, used with main verbs, include forms of *be*, *do*, and *have* and the modal verbs *can*, *will*, *shall*, *could*, *would*, *should*, *may*, *might*, and *must*. (See 46c.) Some helping verbs may be contracted (*he's leaving*, *we'll celebrate*, *they've been told*), but they should not be omitted altogether.

- ▶ We ^{have} been in Chicago since last Thursday.
- ▶ Do you know someone who ^{would} be good for the job?



MULTILINGUAL Some languages do not require a linking verb between a subject and its complement. English, however, requires a verb in every sentence. See 30a.

- ▶ Every night, I read a short book to my daughter. When I ^{am} too busy, my husband reads to her.

EXERCISE 27–2 Edit the following sentences to eliminate problems with -s and -ed verb forms and with omitted verbs. If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

The Pell Grant sometimes ^{covers} ~~cover~~ the student's full tuition.

- a. The glass sculptures of the Swan Boats was prominent in the brightly lit lobby.
 - b. Visitors to the glass museum were not suppose to touch the exhibits.
 - c. Our church has all the latest technology, even a close-circuit television.
 - d. Christos didn't know about Marlo's promotion because he never listens. He always talking.
 - e. Most psychologists agree that no one performs well under stress.
-
1. Have there ever been a time in your life when you were too depressed to get out of bed?
 2. My days in this department have taught me to do what I'm told without asking questions.
 3. We have change our plan and are waiting out the storm before leaving.
 4. Winter training for search-and-rescue divers consist of building up a tolerance to icy water temperatures.
 5. How would you feel if a love one had been a victim of a crime like this?

27f Choose the appropriate verb tense.

Tenses indicate the time of an action in relation to the time of the speaking or writing about that action.

The most common problem with tenses — shifting confusingly from one tense to another — is discussed in section 13. Other problems with tenses are detailed in this section, after the following survey of tenses.

Survey of tenses

Tenses are classified as present, past, and future, with simple, perfect, and progressive forms for each.

Simple tenses The simple tenses indicate relatively simple time relations. The *simple present* tense is used primarily for actions occurring at the same time they are being discussed or for actions occurring regularly. The *simple past* tense is used for actions completed in the past. The *simple future* tense is used for actions that will occur in the future. In the following table, the simple tenses are given for the regular verb *walk*, the irregular verb *ride*, and the highly irregular verb *be*.

**SIMPLE PRESENT
SINGULAR**

I	walk, ride, am
you	walk, ride, are
he/she/it	walks, rides, is

PLURAL

we	walk, ride, are
you	walk, ride, are
they	walk, ride, are

**SIMPLE PAST
SINGULAR**

I	walked, rode, was
you	walked, rode, were
he/she/it	walked, rode, was

PLURAL

we	walked, rode, were
you	walked, rode, were
they	walked, rode, were

SIMPLE FUTURE

I, you, he/she/it, we, they	will walk, ride, be
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Perfect tenses More complex time relations are indicated by the perfect tenses. A verb in one of the perfect tenses (a form of *have* plus the past participle) expresses an action that was or will be completed at the time of another action.

PRESENT PERFECT

I, you, we, they	have walked, ridden, been
he/she/it	has walked, ridden, been

PAST PERFECT

I, you, he/she/it, we, they	had walked, ridden, been
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FUTURE PERFECT

I, you, he/she/it, we, they	will have walked, ridden, been
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Progressive forms The simple and perfect tenses have progressive forms that describe actions in progress. A progressive verb consists of a form of *be* followed by a present participle. The progressive forms are not normally used with certain verbs, such as *believe*, *know*, *hear*, *seem*, and *think*.

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

I	am walking, riding, being
he/she/it	is walking, riding, being
you, we, they	are walking, riding, being

PAST PROGRESSIVE

I, he/she/it	was walking, riding, being
you, we, they	were walking, riding, being

FUTURE PROGRESSIVE

I, you, he/she/it, we, they	will be walking, riding, being
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PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

I, you, we, they	have been walking, riding, being
he/she/it	has been walking, riding, being

PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

I, you, he/she/it, we, they	had been walking, riding, being
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FUTURE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

I, you, he/she/it, we, they	will have been walking, riding, being
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MULTILINGUAL See 28a for more specific examples of verb tenses that can be challenging for multilingual writers.

Special uses of the present tense

Use the present tense when expressing general truths, when writing about literature, and when quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing an author's views.

General truths or scientific principles should appear in the present tense unless such principles have been disproved.

- ▶ Galileo taught that the earth ^{revolves} ~~revolved~~ around the sun.

Because Galileo's teaching has not been discredited, the verb should be in the present tense. The following sentence, however, is acceptable:
Ptolemy taught that the sun revolved around the earth.

When writing about a work of literature, you may be tempted to use the past tense. The convention, however, is to describe fictional events in the present tense.

- In Masuji Ibuse's *Black Rain*, a child ^{reaches}reached for a pomegranate in his mother's garden, and a moment later ^{is}he was dead, killed by the blast of the atomic bomb.

When you are quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing the author of a nonliterary work, use present-tense verbs such as *writes*, *reports*, *asserts*, and so on to introduce the source. This convention is usually followed even when the author is dead (unless a date or the context specifies the time of writing).

- Dr. Jerome Groopman ^{argues}argued that doctors are “susceptible to the subtle and not so subtle efforts of the pharmaceutical industry to sculpt our thinking” (9).

In MLA style, signal phrases are written in the present tense, not the past tense. (See also 59a.)

APA NOTE: When you are documenting a paper with the APA (American Psychological Association) style of in-text citations, use past tense verbs such as *reported* or *demonstrated* or present perfect verbs such as *has reported* or *has demonstrated* to introduce the source.

E. Wilson (1994) reported that positive reinforcement alone was a less effective teaching technique than a mixture of positive reinforcement and constructive criticism.

The past perfect tense

The past perfect tense consists of a past participle preceded by *had* (*had worked*, *had gone*). This tense is used for an action already completed by the time of another past action or for an action already completed at some specific past time.

Everyone *had spoken* by the time I arrived.

I pleaded my case, but Paula *had made up* her mind.

Writers sometimes use the simple past tense when they should use the past perfect.

- We built our cabin high on a pine knoll, forty feet above an abandoned quarry that ^{had been} was flooded in 1920 to create a lake.

The building of the cabin and the flooding of the quarry both occurred in the past, but the flooding was completed before the time of building.

- By the time dinner was served, the guest of honor ^{had} left.

The past perfect tense is needed because the action of leaving was already completed at a specific past time (when dinner was served).

Some writers tend to overuse the past perfect tense. Do not use the past perfect if two past actions occurred at the same time.

- When Ernest Hemingway lived in Cuba, he ^{wrote} had written

For Whom the Bell Tolls.

Sequence of tenses with infinitives and participles

An infinitive is the base form of a verb preceded by *to*. (See 48b.) Use the present infinitive to show action at the same time as or later than the action of the verb in the sentence.

- The club had hoped to ^{raise} have raised a thousand dollars by April 1.

The action expressed in the infinitive (*to raise*) occurred later than the action of the sentence's verb (*had hoped*).

Use the perfect form of an infinitive (*to have* followed by the past participle) for an action occurring earlier than that of the verb in the sentence.

- Dan would like to ^{have joined} join the navy, but he did not pass the physical.

The liking occurs in the present; the joining would have occurred in the past.

Like the tense of an infinitive, the tense of a participle is governed by the tense of the sentence's verb. Use the present

participle (ending in *-ing*) for an action occurring at the same time as that of the sentence's verb.

Hiking the Appalachian Trail in early spring, we spotted many wildflowers.

Use the past participle (such as *given* or *helped*) or the present perfect participle (*having* plus the past participle) for an action occurring before that of the verb.

Discovered off the coast of Florida, the Spanish galleon yielded many treasures.

Having worked her way through college, Lee graduated debt-free.

27g Use the subjunctive mood in the few contexts that require it.

There are three moods in English: the *indicative*, used for facts, opinions, and questions; the *imperative*, used for orders or advice; and the *subjunctive*, used in certain contexts to express wishes, requests, or conditions contrary to fact. For many writers, the subjunctive causes the most problems.

Forms of the subjunctive

In the subjunctive mood, present-tense verbs do not change form to indicate the number and person of the subject (see 21). Instead, the subjunctive uses the base form of the verb (*be*, *drive*, *employ*) with all subjects.

It is important that you *be* [not *are*] prepared for the interview.

We asked that she *drive* [not *drives*] more slowly.

Also, in the subjunctive mood, there is only one past-tense form of *be*: *were* (never *was*).

If I *were* [not *was*] you, I'd try a new strategy.

Uses of the subjunctive

The subjunctive mood appears only in a few contexts: in contrary-to-fact clauses beginning with *if* or expressing a wish; in *that* clauses

following verbs such as *ask, insist, recommend, request, and suggest*; and in certain set expressions.

In contrary-to-fact clauses beginning with *if* When a subordinate clause beginning with *if* expresses a condition contrary to fact, use the subjunctive *were* in place of *was*.

- ▶ If I ^{were} ~~was~~ a member of Congress, I would vote for the new health care bill.

- ▶ The astronomers would be able to see the moons of Jupiter tonight if the weather ^{were} ~~was~~ clearer.

The verbs in these sentences express conditions that do not exist: The writer is not a member of Congress, and the weather is not clear.

Do not use the subjunctive mood in *if* clauses expressing conditions that exist or may exist.

If Dana *wins* the contest, she will leave for Barcelona in June.

In contrary-to-fact clauses expressing a wish In formal English, use the subjunctive *were* in clauses expressing a wish or desire. While use of the indicative is common in informal speech, it is not appropriate in academic writing.

INFORMAL I wish that Dr. Vaughn *was* my professor.

FORMAL I wish that Dr. Vaughn *were* my professor.

In *that* clauses following verbs such as *ask, insist, request, and suggest* Because requests have not yet become reality, they are expressed in the subjunctive mood.

- ▶ Professor Moore insists that her students ^{be} ~~are~~ on time.
- ▶ We recommend that Lambert ^{file} ~~files~~ form 1050 soon.

In certain set expressions The subjunctive mood, once more widely used, remains in certain set expressions: *Be that as it may, as it were, far be it from me*, and so on.

EXERCISE 27–3 Edit the following sentences to eliminate errors in verb tense or mood. If a sentence is correct, write “correct” after it. Answers to lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

After the path ^{had been} ~~was~~ plowed, we were able to walk through the park.

- a. The palace of Knossos in Crete is believed to have been destroyed by fire around 1375 BCE.
- b. Watson and Crick discovered the mechanism that controlled inheritance in all life: the workings of the DNA molecule.
- c. When city planners proposed rezoning the waterfront, did they know that the mayor promised to curb development in that neighborhood?
- d. Tonight’s concert begins at 9:30. If it were earlier, I’d consider going.
- e. As soon as my aunt applied for the position of pastor, the post was filled by an inexperienced seminary graduate who had been so hastily snatched that his mortarboard was still in midair.
1. Don Quixote, in Cervantes’s novel, was an idealist ill suited for life in the real world.
2. Visiting the technology museum inspired the high school seniors and had reminded them that science could be fun.
3. I would like to have been on the *Mayflower* but not to have experienced the first winter.
4. When the director yelled “Action!” I forgot my lines, even though I practiced my part every waking hour for three days.
5. If midday naps were a regular practice in American workplaces, employees would be far more productive.