

Virtual Writing Tutor

Grammar Checker Guide

by Nicholas Walker

Copyright 2018

Visit the **Virtual Writing Tutor**
100% Free English Grammar Checker

The Virtual Writing Tutor Grammar Checker

Virtual Writing Tutor

Share:    


Lex Publications
BOKOMARU
Publications

About

Terms

Contact

Products

API

18 Forum

19 Profile

20 Login

Grammar checker: Check your English writing with this free online ESL grammar checker. Click "Check spelling" and then "Check grammar." For speech recognition, click on the microphone icon and begin speaking.

Type, speak or copy-paste your text here. Members can now check 3000 words and non-members can check 500 words. Membership is 100% free. Click the Login button to become a member today.



1 Count Words

2 Check Spelling

3 Check Grammar

4 Check Vocabulary

5 Check Paraphrase

6 Clear

7 Dictionary

8 Essay Outliner

9 Hypertext Narrative

10 Feedback

11 Print

12 Games

13 

Features of the Virtual Writing Tutor Grammar Checker

1. You can **count your words**.
2. After typing or pasting your text into the text area, **check your spelling** first. Errors are underlined in red. Right-click to see suggestions. Select the spelling you want from the drop-down menu.
3. Once you have corrected your spelling, **check grammar** next. Errors are listed below with suggestions and links to activities. (Members can check 3000 words at a time.)
4. You can also **check vocabulary** with a variety of tools to check your word choice: academic word choice, field-related vocabulary, clichés and power words, and target structures.
5. If you are using other people's ideas, **check paraphrasing** to avoid plagiarism. The system will compare your text to the original.
6. Click **Clear** to start again.
7. Look up words in the **Cambridge Dictionary**.

Membership is 100% free. We don't send spam.

8. Organize your ideas with 3 **essay outlining tools**. (Members only)
9. Create an interactive "Choose Your Own Adventure" story with the **Hypertext Narrative Creator**. (Members only)
10. All of the texts you check are saved with the feedback you received. Click **Feedback** to retrieve it and delete it. (Members only)
11. Print your text.
12. You can play an **Error Correction Game** with your own errors to help you review what you have learned. (Members only)
13. You can display the feedback on the right side of your text if you want a different **Layout**.
14. Instead of typing your text, use a microphone to speak your text into the text area using **Speech Recognition**.
15. Get pronunciation help using the **Text-to-Speech** system.
16. Download an **MP3** of your text to help with your pronunciation.
17. Download your text as a **doc file**.
18. Get more help with your writing from a human on the **forum**.
19. Change your language preference, password, newsletter settings, and email address in your **Profile**.
20. Members should **Login** to enjoy the benefits of membership.

About the Virtual Writing Tutor Grammar Checker

What?

The Virtual Writing Tutor is a 100% free grammar checker website, created primarily for English Second Language learners to help them learn English better and faster.

Who?

The Virtual Writing Tutor was created by me, Nicholas Walker. I'm a tenured ESL teacher at Ahuntsic College in Montreal. I earned a B.A. in English Literature (1995), a TESL Certificate (2002), and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics (2009) from Concordia University. I taught for 5 years in South Korea. In June 2017, TESL Canada awarded my Actively Engaged Series of textbooks the TESL Canada Innovation Award. In November 2017, the Minister of Heritage Canada, the Honorable Melanie Joly, presented me with a Sesquicentennial Pin Award for Leadership in Education.



Why?

Feedback on errors helps learners become better writers. Learners around the world benefit from access to a free grammar checker. Because I designed Virtual Writing Tutor for my own ESL students, learners' needs were always my top concern.

How?

The Virtual Writing Tutor is ad-supported and contains affiliate links. I have kept the commercial elements of my website a minimum because ads can be distracting to learners, but they are still important because the ads and affiliate links help pay for the maintenance and development of the website.

5 Ways You Can Help

1. Use the Virtual Writing Tutor a lot. Try out all of the features and send us feedback at admin@VirtualWritingTutor.com. Good or bad, we want to hear from you. If you encounter a problem, send a screenshot so that we know how best to fix it.
2. Become a member, and click "Report" if you see bad feedback or a false alarm.
3. Subscribe to the VWT Newsletter and tell your friends, teachers, and colleagues about the new features on the Virtual Writing Tutor.
4. Follow the Virtual Writing Tutor on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/Virtualwritingtutor/>
5. **Share this writing guide** with your friends on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. Link to the [Virtual Writing Tutor](#) on your blogs, and help spread the word. Links help search engines find us.

Visual Grammar Reference

Humans are equipped with a large visual cortex and a brain wired for meaning. So, it is not surprising that learners struggle to remember a grammar structure until they have a clear cognitive image of what it means. Use the pictures in this visual reference to help you understand and remember the form, meaning, and use of many English grammar structures.

Compare the Present Progressive and the Present Perfect Progressive

Present Progressive

We use the **Present Progressive** to describe an activity that is happening now.



Mary is crying.
(The crying continues.)

Present Perfect Progressive

We use the **Present Perfect Progressive** to describe an activity that was recently finished or interrupted.



Susie has been crying.
(The crying stopped recently.)

Compare the Present Progressive, going to, and the Future Simple

Present Progressive

We use the **Present Progressive and going to** for future arrangements and existing plans.



Woman: I am meeting my doctor on Tuesday. I am going to quit smoking, and I want his help.

Future Simple

We use the **Future Simple** to volunteer to do something in the future.



Boss: Who wants to write the report?
Man: I will do it.

Compare will and be going to, and the Present Simple with when

will and be going to

We use **will and be going to** for predictions about the future with no difference in meaning.



You will go on a trip. You will meet the love of your life. You are going to marry. You are going to have a large family.

Present Simple

We use the **Present Simple** with **when and will or be going to** to predict events after future conditions.



I will have your money when my paycheck arrives, and I will give you the money when I see you next week.

Compare the Present Simple versus the Present Progressive

Present Simple

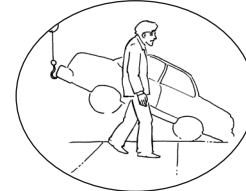
We use the **Present Simple** to talk about routines, habits, facts, and normal perceptions. We also use this tense to tell jokes and say what an author thinks or believes.



Man: I walk to work.
(This is his normal routine.)

Present Progressive

We use the **Present Progressive** to talk about temporary situations, actions in progress, abnormal perceptions, complaints and plans. We also use it to describe actions in pictures.



Man: I am walking to work.
(This is just temporary.)



Man: I live in Montreal.
(This is permanent.)



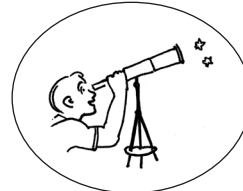
Student: I am living in Montreal.
(This is just temporary.)



Does that kid smoke?
(Is it his usual habit?)



Is that kid smoking?
(Is it happening now?)



Man: I see stars.
(This is a normal perception.)



Patient: I am seeing stars.
(This is an abnormal perception.)



Man: I hear voices.
(This is a normal perception.)



Patient: I am hearing voices.
(This is abnormal.)



Wife: My husband always leaves the toilet seat up.
(This is a habit.)



Wife: My husband is always leaving the toilet seat up.
(This happens too often.)

Compare the effect of aspect on meaning



Present Simple

You: Tell me about your job.

Man: I work hard.

What is he saying?

This man is describing his normal routine.

Explanation:

The **Simple Aspect** emphasizes that an activity is normal and routine.



Present Progressive

You: What are you doing?

Woman: I am working hard.

What is she saying?

The woman is describing her situation now.

Explanation:

The **Progressive Aspect** emphasizes that an activity is temporary and in-progress.



Present Perfect Progressive

You: You are covered in paint!

Man: I have been working hard.

What is he saying?

The man is describing a recently interrupted activity.

Explanation:

The **Perfect Progressive Aspect** emphasizes the activity that was recently finished or interrupted.



Present Perfect

You: Your house looks great!

Man: I have worked hard.

What is he saying?

The man is explaining why he got such a great result.

Explanation:

The **Perfect Aspect** can express a past event to emphasize its present consequences.

The Verb System: Tense + Aspect

	Simple Aspect	Progressive Aspect	Perfect Progressive Aspect	Perfect Aspect
Present Tense	<p>Present Simple I work. You work. She/He/It works. We work. They work.</p> <p>Negative I/You/We/They don't work. She/He/It doesn't work.</p> <p>Question Do I/You/We/They work? Does She/He/It work?</p>	<p>Present Progressive I am working. You are working. She/He/It is working. We are working. They are working.</p> <p>Negative I/You/We/They aren't working. She/He/It isn't working.</p> <p>Question Am I working? Are you/we/they working? Is she/he/it work?</p>	<p>Present Perfect Progressive I have been working. You have been working. She/He/It has been working. We have been working. They have been working.</p> <p>Negative I/You/We/They haven't been working. She/He/It hasn't been working.</p> <p>Question Have I/you/we/they been working? Has she/he/it been working?</p>	<p>Present Perfect I have worked. You have worked. She/He/It has worked. We have worked. They have worked.</p> <p>Negative I/You/We/They haven't worked. She/He/It hasn't worked.</p> <p>Question Have I/you/we/they worked? Has she/he/it worked?</p>
Past Tense	<p>Past Simple I worked. You worked. She/He/It worked. We worked. They worked.</p> <p>Negative I/You/We/They didn't work. She/He/It didn't work.</p> <p>Question Did I/you/we/they/she/he/it work?</p>	<p>Past Progressive I was working. You were working. She/He/It was working. We were working. They were working.</p> <p>Negative I/She/He/It wasn't working. You/We/They weren't working.</p> <p>Question Was I/she/he/it working? Were you/we/they working?</p>	<p>Past Perfect Progressive I had been working. You had been working. She/He/It had been working. We had been working. They had been working.</p> <p>Negative I/You/She/He/It/We/They hadn't been working.</p> <p>Question Had I/you/she/he/it/we/they been working?</p>	<p>Past Perfect I had worked. You had worked. She/He/It had worked. We had worked. They had worked.</p> <p>Negative I/You/We/They hadn't worked. She/He/It hadn't worked.</p> <p>Question Had I/you/she/he/it/we/they worked?</p>
Future Tense	<p>Future Simple I will work. You will work. She/He/It will work. We will work. They will work.</p> <p>Negative I/You/She/He/It/We/They won't work.</p> <p>Question Will I/you/she/he/it/we/they work?</p>	<p>Future Progressive I will be working. You will be working. She/He/It will be working. We will be working. They will be working.</p> <p>Negative I/You/She/He/It/We/They won't be working.</p> <p>Question Will I/you/she/he/it/we/they be working?</p>	<p>Future Perfect Progressive I will have been working. You will have been working. She/He/It will have been working. We will have been working. They will have been working.</p> <p>Negative I/You/She/He/It/We/They won't have been working.</p> <p>Question Will I/you/she/he/it/we/they have been working?</p>	<p>Future Perfect I will have worked. You will have worked. She/He/It will have worked. We will have worked. They will have worked.</p> <p>Negative I/you/she/he/it/we/they won't have worked.</p> <p>Question Will I/you/she/he/it/we/they have worked?</p>

Compare the Present Perfect and Past Simple

Present Perfect

We use the **Present Perfect** to talk about events or situations or routines in a period of time that includes the present. Sometimes the situation or routine endures into the present, and sometimes it is the effect of a past action that endures.



Minister: Have you dated for a long time?

Past Simple

We use the **Past Simple** to describe events or situations in the past. The situation or routine does not endure into the present. It is finished. This tense, therefore, does not imply a present significance of a past action to the same degree as the **Present Perfect**.



Friend: Did you date for a long time?



Mother: Have you washed your hands for dinner?



Doctor: Did you wash your hands before eating dinner?

Using the Past Simple and the Past Progressive with *when* and *while*

We use the **Past Progressive** to name the activity that was happening in the background when another shorter action described by the **Past Simple**, happened or interrupted it.

Notice it is *while* + **Past Progressive** and *when* + **Past Simple**.



Witness: Helen was walking to the bus stop when a taxi splashed her.



Boyfriend: She told me the news while I was drinking my coffee.

Compare the Past Simple and the Past Progressive

Past Simple

We use the **Past Simple** to ask about and tell a series of past events.



Friend #1: What did you do on your trip?
Friend #2: I went to a show, I swam in the ocean, and I visited a museum.

Past Progressive

We use the **Past Progressive** to ask about and name an ongoing activity in progress at a specific time in the past.



Policeman: What were you doing at 9 PM on April 5th?
Suspect: I was watching TV with my girlfriend. We were watching the hockey game.

Would or Should + Perfect Infinitive

would/should + have + past participle

We use **would + perfect infinitive** to express regret about a **lost opportunity**. We use **should + perfect infinitive** to express a **failure to fulfill a past obligation**.



Woman: I would have watched the movie with you! You should have invited me.

Compare the Past Simple with the Past Perfect



When Bill saw the vase that Louise had bought, he hated it.
(First Louise bought it, then Bill saw it.)



Later, Bill threw the vase in the garbage.



When Louise discovered that Bill had thrown it out, she exploded.
(First he threw it away, then Louise discovered it was gone.)

Irregular Verbs (arranged from least regular to most regular)

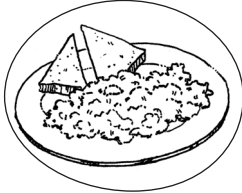
Infinitive	Past	Past Participle	Infinitive	Past	Past Participle	Infinitive	Past	Past Participle
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>N</u>	find	found	found
<i>The first two forms are the same but the PP ends with an N-sound.</i>			<i>The first two forms are different, and the PP ends with an N-sound.</i>			grind	ground	ground
beat	beat	beaten	bite	bit	bitten	hang	hung	hung
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	break	broke	broken	have	had	had
<i>The infinitive and PP are the same.</i>			do	did	done	hear	heard	heard
become	became	become	draw	drew	drawn	hold	held	held
come	came	come	drive	drove	driven	keep	kept	kept
run	ran	run	eat	ate	eaten	lay	laid	laid
<u>I</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	eat	ate	eaten	lead	led	led
<i>Each form has a different vowel.</i>			fly	flew	flown	leave	left	left
begin	began	begun	freeze	froze	frozen	lend	lent	lent
drink	drank	drunk	get	got	gotten	light	lit	lit
shrink	shrank	shrunk	give	gave	given	lose	lost	lost
sing	sang	sung	go	went	gone	make	made	made
sink	sank	sunk	grow	grew	grown	mean	meant	meant
swim	swam	swum	hide	hid	hidden	meet	met	met
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	know	knew	known	pay	paid	paid
<i>All three forms are the same.</i>			lie	lay	lain	read	read	read
cost	cost	cost	see	saw	seen	say	said	said
cut	cut	cut	take	took	taken	sell	sold	sold
hit	hit	hit	throw	threw	thrown	send	sent	sent
hurt	hurt	hurt	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	shoot	shot	shot
let	let	let	<i>The past form and PP are the same.</i>			sit	sat	sat
put	put	put	bleed	bled	bled	sleep	slept	slept
quit	quit	quit	bring	brought	brought	slide	slid	slid
set	set	set	buy	bought	bought	spend	spent	spent
shut	shut	shut	catch	caught	caught	stand	stood	stood
spilt	spilt	spilt	dig	dug	dug	stick	stuck	stuck
spread	spread	spread	fall	fell	fell	strike	struck	struck
upset	upset	upset	feed	fed	fed	sweep	swept	swept
			feel	felt	felt	swing	swung	swung
			fight	fought	fought	teach	taught	taught
						tell	told	told
						think	thought	thought
						understand	understood	understood
						win	won	won

TO BE and TO HAVE and TO DO

To Be	To Have	To Do
Present	Present	Present
<i>I am</i>	<i>I have</i>	<i>I do</i>
<i>You are</i>	<i>You have</i>	<i>You do</i>
<i>She/He/It is</i>	<i>She/He/It has</i>	<i>She/He/It does</i>
<i>We are</i>	<i>We have</i>	<i>We do</i>
<i>They are</i>	<i>They have</i>	<i>They do</i>
Past	Past	Past
<i>I/She/He/It was</i>	<i>I/You/She/He/It/</i>	<i>I/You/She/He/It/</i>
<i>You/We/They were</i>	<i>We/They had</i>	<i>We/They did</i>

Virtual Writing Tutor

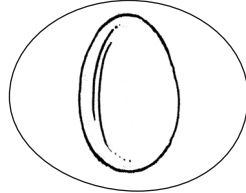
Articles



Uncountable

Do you want egg and toast for breakfast?

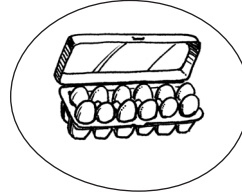
Egg on a plate is uncountable. Notice that the substance is pictured without its egg shell. It does not have a container.



Singular Countable

The recipe calls for an egg.

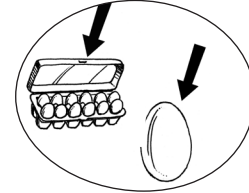
An egg in its shell is singular and countable. Notice that the egg is in its usual container.



Plural Countable

We need more eggs.

Eggs in their shells are countable. When you can count their containers (eggshells), you can express the noun as a plural.



Definite Article

Don't drop the eggs!
Don't drop the egg!

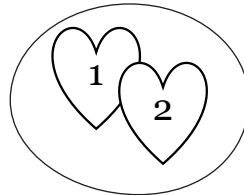
When you want to refer to a specific egg or specific eggs, use "the" as a pointing word.



Abstract Noun

Love is a wonderful thing.

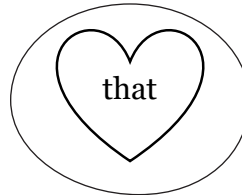
Do not use articles with abstract nouns, except under certain conditions.



A/An + Abstract Noun

Music is a love of mine.
Science is another.

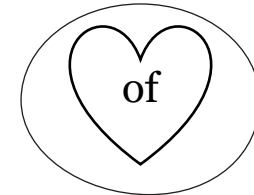
Use the indefinite articles a/an for one of multiple instances of the abstraction.



The + Abstract Noun + Defining Relative

The love (that) I feel for you is overpowering.

Use the definite article if the abstraction is qualified by a defining relative.



The + Abstraction + of + noun

The love of money is the root of all evil.

Use the definite article if the abstraction is qualified by the preposition of + noun phrase.

Polite and Informal Modals



How may I help you?
(Polite offer of help)



Could you help me?
(Polite request for help)



Would you like to start?
(Polite invitation)



Could you start?
(Polite request)



What can I get you?
(Informal offer)



I will have a coffee.
(Informal request)



I would like a cup of tea.
(Polite request)



Could I have a coffee?
(Polite request)

Adjective Order



Rule: Adjectives have a specific order in English:

possessives ⇒ general description
⇒ size ⇒ shape ⇒ colour ⇒ noun

I like your sister's beautiful, long, straight, blonde hair.

Adverb Order



Rule: Put adverbs before the main verb but after the verb *TO BE*:

subject ⇒ adverb ⇒ verb
I often wear high heels.

subject ⇒ *TO BE* ⇒ adverb
I am always well-dressed.

Prepositions

in

Rule: Use **in** for things that are contained by borders or limits: cities, provinces, states, countries, and continents.

*I live **in** Montreal. Montreal is **in** Quebec. Quebec is **in** Canada.*



Rule: Use **in** for months and years.

*Obama was born **in** 1961. He was born **in** August.*



Rule: Use **in** for morning and afternoon.

*Goodbye. I will see you **in** the morning.*

Rule: Use **on** for tables and walls, etc.

*Put your coffee cup **on** the table and help me hang another picture **on** the wall.*



on

Rule: Use **on** for roads, boulevards, streets, highways, etc.

*I live **on** Peel Street and ride home **on** the bike path.*

Rule: Use **on** for electronic devices, etc.

*Call me **on** the phone so that I can tell you about a great movie I saw **on** TV last night.*



Rule: Use **on** for days and dates.

*Melanie usually stayed home **on** Saturdays, but **on** September 24th she went out and had an adventure.*



Rule: Use **at** with street numbers.

*I live **at** 2350 Acacia Road.*

at

Rule: Use **at** with specific locations.

*I'm **at** home. Where are you? Are you **at** work?*



Rule: Use **at** for precise times.

*I wake up **at** 6:30 in the morning, leave home **at** 7:30, and then arrive **at** work **at** 8:00 AM.*

*My train arrives **at** 3:14.*



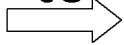
Rule: Use **from** and **to** to express start and end points of a trip.

*We drove **from** Montreal **to** Toronto without stopping.*

*The dance class was moved **from** the second floor **to** the third floor.*



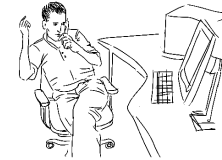
to



Rule: Use **from** and **to** to express start and end times.

*Our offices are open **from** 9 **to** 5 every day.*

*I lived in Toronto **from** 2011 **to** 2013.*



Determiners: This, that, these, those



This

This is my uncle.

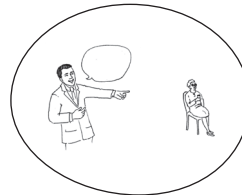
Use **this** to introduce one person or thing that is close.



These

These are my parents

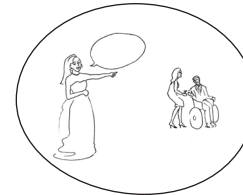
Use **these** to introduce people or things that are close.



That

That is my grandmother.

Use **that** to introduce one person or thing that is far.



Those

Those are my cousins.

Use **those** to introduce people or things that are far.

Avoidable Errors

1. Adjective agreement error

- ✗ We sell t-shirts and some others clothes.
- ✓ We sell t-shirts and some other clothes.
- ? Adjectives and noun modifiers should not take a plural form when they modify plural nouns in English. There are, however, a few noun modifiers that end in an -s: operations, arms, sports, jobs, forensics, physics

2. Adjective form error

- ✗ When I heard the news, I was very anger.
- ✓ When I heard the news, I was very angry.
- ? Use the adjective form not the noun form in this context.

3. Adverb error

- ✗ I trust more my parents than my friends.
- ✓ I trust my parents more than my friends.
- ? The adverb is in the wrong place. Do not separate *more* from *than*.

4. Article and plural noun error

- ✗ My sister has a children.
- ✓ My sister has a child.
- ? Don't use indefinite articles with plural words.

5. Article and uncountable noun

- ✗ I have a brown skin.
- ✓ I have brown skin.
- ? Don't use an article with uncountable nouns like "skin".

6. Aspect error

- ✗ Every day, I am waking up late.
- ✓ Every day, I wake up late.
- ? Use the Present Simple, not the Present Progressive, for normal routines.
- ✗ He is deserving to win the award.
- ✓ He deserves to win the award.
- ? Use the simple aspect form of "deserving" in this context. When expressing a fact, these stative verbs tend not to use the progressive aspect: agree, appear, believe, belong, concern, consist, contain, deny, depend, deserve, disagree, dislike, doubt, fit, hat, hear, imagine, impress, include, involve, know, like, love, matter, mean, mind, need, own, please, prefer, promise, realize, recognize, remember, see, seem, smell, sound, suppose, surprise, taste, think, understand, want, wish.

7. Auxiliary error

- ✗ We don't will have an exam next Tuesday.
- ✓ We won't have an exam next Tuesday.
- ? You cannot negate a modal auxiliary in this way. Use "won't" instead.

8. Capitalization error

- ✗ I work at Bordeaux jail as a prison guard.
- ✓ I work at Bordeaux Jail as a prison guard.
- ? Capitalize every word in the name of an institution.

9. Collocation error

- ✗ I moved here to be closer from school.
- ✓ I moved here to be closer to school.
- ? The usual collocation for *closer* is *to* not *from*.
- ✗ Success depends of you.
- ✓ Success depends on you.
- ? The usual collocation for *depend* is *on* not *of*.

10. Comparative adjective error

- ✗ If I learn a second language, finding a job will become more easy for me.
- ✓ If I learn a second language, finding a job will become easier for me.
- ? Remove the word 'more' and simply write "easier." English has two comparative adjective forms. Add -er to the end of one or two

syllable adjectives. Use 'more' with longer adjectives. Here is a list of adjectives that usually take -er: *big, black, bold, brave, bright, busy, clean, clear, clever, cold, cool, dark, dear, deep, dirty, dry, easy, fair, fast, fat, fine, funny, great, green, happy, hard, healthy, heavy, high, hot, kind, large, late, lazy, light, long, low, lucky, mad, merry, narrow, naughty, near, new, noisy, old, pale, poor, pretty, proud, quick, red, rich, sad, safe, shallow, sharp, short, slow, small, smooth, strong, sweet, tall, thick, thin, tiny, ugly, warm, wealthy, wet, white, wide, wild, wise, young, angry, little, short, blue, yellow, pink, orange, simple, shy.*

- ✗ So my job will be more easier for me if I am able to speak English as well as I can speak French.
- ✓ So my job will be easier for me if I am able to speak English as well as I can speak French.
- ? Do not use both -er and *more*. This is called a double comparative. Remove the word 'more' and simply write "easier."

11. Contraction error

- ✗ That's who I'm.
- ✓ That's who I am.
- ? Do not end a sentence with a pronoun + verb contraction.
- ✗ I didn't know the answer.
- ✓ I didn't know the answer.
- ? The apostrophe points to what is missing. In this case, it is the 'o' in 'not'. Revise: *didn't*

12. Conditional error

- ✗ If I will get a better job, I will buy a car.
- ✓ If I get a better job, I will buy a car.
- ? Do not put 'will' in 'If' clauses. Use the Present Simple instead.

13. Double negative

- ✗ I made her cookies but she didn't eat none.
- ✓ I made her cookies but she didn't eat any.
- ? This is called a double-negative error since "didn't" and "none" are both negative. Use "any" instead of "none."
- ✗ In my opinion, video games don't hurt nobody.
- ✓ In my opinion, video games don't hurt anybody.
- ? This is called a double-negative error since "didn't" and "nobody" are both negative. Use "anybody" instead of "nobody."

14. Double subject

- ✗ Me, I like to dance.
- ✓ I like to dance.
- ? Start your sentence with "I" not "me, I."
- ✗ What I'm sure about it's that I was the first one to arrive.
- ✓ What I'm sure about is that I was the first one to arrive.
- ? The pronoun "it" in this sentence is unnecessary since you already have a subject, "What I'm sure about."

15. Future tense error

- ✗ In the future, we go on a trip to Africa.
- ✓ In the future, we will go on a trip to Africa.
- ? Don't forget the auxiliary verb "will" for future events.
- ✗ I gonna be rich one day.
- ✓ I am going to be rich one day.
- ? The word *gonna* is slang. Make sure you develop full command of *am/is/are going to* for contexts where slang would be considered inappropriate.
- ✗ When I will arrive, I will give you the money I owe you.
- ✓ When I arrive, I will give you the money I owe you.
- ? Do not use "will" in clauses that begin with *as soon as, the moment, before, after, once, if, or when*. These time clauses already have a future meaning. Use the Present Simple instead.

16. Gerund error

- ✗ We talked about to go, but in the end decided to stay home.
- ✓ We talked about going, but in the end decided to stay home.
- ? You cannot use an infinitive form after a preposition. Use a gerund instead.

- × The first thing I do when I arrive is going to my locker to hang up my coat.
- ✓ The first thing I do when I arrive is go to my locker to hang up my coat.
- ? Use a bare infinitive not a gerund in this context.

17. H epenthesis

- × He his my best friend.
- ✓ He is my best friend.
- ? An “h” was added to “is” by mistake. “His” is a possessive form. “Is” is a verb.

18. His or her instead of its

- × The New Democratic Party is increasing his popularity.
- ✓ The New Democratic Party is increasing its popularity.
- ? A political party is not a person. Use “its” for a non-person.

19. Idiomatic expression error

- × They jumped on the occasion.
- ✓ They jumped at the chance.
- ? This is a rather unnatural phrase in English. Try “jumped at the chance” instead.
- × This singer is very known.
- ✓ This singer is well-known.
- ? This is a rather unnatural phrase in English.

20. Infinitive error

- × I would like to thanks all my friends for their help.
- ✓ I would like to thank all my friends for their help.
- ? Use the base form of the verb with “to”.
- × We were supposed to went early, but we woke up late.
- ✓ We were supposed to go early, but we woke up late.
- ? Use the base form of the verb with “to”.

21. Intensifier error

- × I very like ice cream.
- ✓ I really like ice cream.
- ? “Very” is used with an adjective to express degree: *It is very hot; it is very cold; she is very good, etc.* “Really” can be used with a verb to express manner: *I really like it; she really hates me; we really work hard; etc.*

22. Irregular verb form error

- × We meeted at a restaurant.
- ✓ We met at a restaurant.
- ? Review irregular past tense verbs. You cannot add -ed to this verb.

23. Its or it is

- × Its hard to remember all these rules.
- ✓ It’s hard to remember all these rules.
- ? *It’s* is *it* plus the contracted form of the verb *is*, not a possessive form. Do not forget the apostrophe in the contraction.
- × Look at the dog chasing it’s tail.
- ✓ Look at the dog chasing its tail.
- ? *Its* is a possessive form, not a contraction. Do not use the apostrophe in the possessive form of pronouns.

24. Missing article

- × I am accountant.
- ✓ I am an accountant.
- ? Use an indefinite article before the name of a job or profession.

25. Missing auxiliary

- × You making me crazy.
- ✓ You are making me crazy.
- ? You need an auxiliary (helping) verb to go with the *-ing* form.
- × I always be there for you.
- ✓ I will always be there for you.
- ? In a promise about the future, use the future modal auxiliary verb *will* with the infinitive form of your main verb.

26. Missing -s

- × It hurt my feeling.
- ✓ It hurt my feelings.
- ? When we talk about emotional pain, we use the word *feeling* with an -s on the end. It is never singular. However, if we want to talk about a sensation, we can use *feeling* without an -s. For example, we say *I have a strange feeling in my stomach*.
- × I am wearing a short and a t-shirt.
- ✓ I am wearing shorts and a t-shirt.
- ? Some nouns are always plural. Here is a short list: shorts, jeans, pajamas, scissors, pliers, news, politics, sports.

27. Missing word

- × I decided to put my swimsuit and go for a swim.
- ✓ I decided to put my swimsuit on and go for a swim.
- ? You are missing the word *on* after *swimsuit*. The phrasal verb *put on* means “get dressed.” The verb *put* without *on* means “to place.”

28. Modal error

- × I will like to have a better job.
- ✓ I would like to have a better job.
- ? Use *would* not *will* to express a desire for a different present. Use *will* to express a prediction.

29. Negation error

- × I was not very enjoy telling the bad news.
- ✓ I did not really enjoy telling the bad news.
- ? To negate a Past Simple tense verb use *did not* instead of *was not*. Use *was/were not* for adjectives and nouns instead.
- × We did not happy when she told us.
- ✓ We were not happy when she told us.
- ? Use *was not* or *were not* to negate adjectives and nouns.
- × I don’t have gone there before.
- ✓ I haven’t gone there before.
- ? Negate the Present Perfect by putting *not* or *n’t* after the auxiliary *have* or *has*.

30. Non-standard phrase

- × In life, you have to accept the goods and the bads.
- ✓ In life, you have to accept the ups and downs.
- ? This is a non-standard phrase. The usual way to express this idea in English is to say *ups and downs* or *pluses and minuses*.

31. One word written as two

- × My class is in the after noon.
- ✓ My class is in the afternoon.
- ? This word sequence is usually spelled together as one word. Here is a short list of other combinations that should be written together: lookout, ourselves, overweight, straight-jacket, workplace

32. Past tense error

- × I have been living here since I am born.
- ✓ I have been living here since I was born.
- ? The phrase “since I am” means “because I am”. However, “since I was born” means “from the day that I was born”.
- × She has arrived yesterday.
- ✓ She arrived yesterday.
- ? You cannot use the Present Perfect with a specific time in the past. Use the Past Simple instead.

33. Perfect infinitive error

- × I often wonder how many opportunities I would had had if I had finished university.
- ✓ I often wonder how many opportunities I would have had if I had finished university.
- ? There is a problem here with the perfect infinitive in this sentence. You cannot follow a modal with a past form. The correct form is modal + *have* + past participle.

34. Possessive form error

- × The accident was no one fault.
- ✓ The accident was no one's fault.
- ? When the fault belongs to no one, then a possessive form is needed.
- × My keys are in my coat's pocket.
- ✓ My keys are in my coat pocket. OR My keys are in the pocket of my coat.
- ? You do not need a possessive form here. Use 'coat' as a noun modifier instead. To talk about parts of non-living things, use the noun + noun structure or the *of* structure.

35. Preposition error

- × I live at Montreal.
- ✓ I live in Montreal.
- ? Use *in* for cities and towns. Use *on* for streets. Use *at* for a street address.

36. Present Perfect error

- × It's been 5 years that I work here.
- ✓ I have worked here for 5 years.
- ? Use the Present Perfect for past events that include the present.
- × I am living here since 2012.
- ✓ I have lived here since 2012.
- ? Use the Present Perfect for past events that include the present.

37. Pronoun antecedent error

- × This article is about how people learn words and remember it.
- ✓ This article is about how people learn words and remember them.
- ? In this sentence, the singular pronoun *it* incorrectly refers to the plural antecedent *words*. Your pronoun should agree in number with its antecedent. Use *them* with a plural antecedent.

38. Punctuation error

- × Education should be free-
- ✓ Education should be free.
- ? Do not put a space before a punctuation mark. Put the space after it.

39. Quantifier error

- × How much people were there at the party?
- ✓ How many people were there at the party?
- ? Use *much* with singular or uncountable nouns and *many* with plural nouns.

40. Question form

- × Are you work here?
- ✓ Do you work here?
- ? Use a form of the auxiliary *do* with simple aspect verbs in questions. Use *are* for adjectives and nouns.
- × Did you are tired after work?
- ✓ Were you tired after work?
- ? Use a form of the auxiliary *do* with simple aspect verbs in questions. Use a form of *be* for adjectives and nouns.

41. Quoted and reported speech

- × I said, « The test is on Tuesday. »
- ✓ I said, "The test is on Tuesday."
- ? In English, we do not use « » for quoted speech. We use " " instead. (Hint: you can find the double quote symbol on the French keyboard above the number 2 key.)
- × She said, that I was wrong.
- ✓ She said that I was wrong.
- ? Do not put a comma before reported speech (also known as an indirect quotation).

42. Redundant phrase and wordiness error

- × I think practicing English with classmates is equally as effective.
- ✓ I think practicing English with classmates is as effective.
- ? Do not say *equally as*. Use either *equally* or *as* on its own.

43. Slang

- × The college has sent everyone an invite to the event.
- ✓ The college has sent everyone an invitation to the event.
- ? The word *invite* used as a noun is slang. Avoid slang in formal writing. Here is a list of slang words that should be avoided in the formal register: anyways, gonna, kinda, sorta, wanna, ain't

44. (Common) Spelling Errors

- × Come whit me.
- ✓ Come with me.
- × Wich one do you want?
- ✓ Which one do you want?
- × I tought you liked that.
- ✓ I thought you liked that.
- × I like my program even tough it is difficult.
- ✓ I like my program even though it is difficult.
- × I live in Montréal, Québec.
- ✓ I live in Montreal, Quebec.
- ? Avoid using diacritics in English. They can appear (cliché, fiancé, resumé) but are never compulsory.
- × This is begining to make sense.
- ✓ This is beginning to make sense.
- ? Double a final single consonant before an *-ing* or *-ed* suffix when both of these conditions apply: (a) one vowel precedes the consonant; and (b1) it is a one-syllable word or (b2) a stressed syllable.
- × flys, ladys, citys, enemys, puppys, armys, supplys, skys, partys, libraris, rels, marrys, theorys, studys
- ✓ flies, ladies, cities, enemies, puppies, armies, supplies, skies, parties, libraries, relies, marries, theories, studies
- ? Change the y to -ie before adding -s when preceded by a consonant.

45. Verb agreement error

- × One of my friends are driving.
- ✓ One of my friends is driving.
- ? Make sure your verb agrees with its subject. The noun phrase *one of my friends* is singular and therefore requires the singular form *is* not *are*.

46. Tense shift

- × At lunch, Jane pointed straight at me, and she says, "You are a liar!"
- ✓ At lunch, Jane pointed straight at me, and she said, "You are a liar!"
- ? Do not shift from a past tense verb to a present tense arbitrarily in the same sentence.
- × I stayed with her for a while to be sure that she will be okay.
- ✓ I stayed with her for a while to be sure that she would be okay.
- ? Use *would* not *will* in a sentence describing past events.

47. Word choice error

- × There are less people applying to Liberal Arts programs these days.
- ✓ There are fewer people applying to Liberal Arts programs these days.
- ? *Less* is the comparative form of the adjective *little*. Use *less* with uncountable nouns like *salt* or *time*. *Fewer* is the comparative form of *few*. Use *fewer* with countable nouns like *people* and *cars*.

48. Word form error

- × I was boring, so I thought it would be fun to go on a trip and visit the island.
- ✓ I was bored, so I thought it would be fun to go on a trip and visit the island.
- ? "Boring" is the wrong form of the verb "to bore" for this context. An easy way to remember the difference between "boring" and "bored" is anything that is "boring" is the cause of the boredom and anyone who is "bored" is affected by boredom. In this case you were affected by boredom.

49. Word order error

- × My girlfriend has blonde straight long hair.
- ✓ My girlfriend has long straight blonde hair.
- ? Adjectives appear in a particular order: size → shape → colour → NOUN
- × I am not enough good, and there is not time enough to practice.
- ✓ I am not good enough, and there is not enough time to practice.
- ? Put the word *enough* after adjectives but before nouns.

50. Your or you're

- × Everybody knows your crazy.
- ✓ Everybody knows you're crazy.
- ? *Your* is a possessive word. *You're* is the contracted form of *you + are*. When you want to link a pronoun to an adjective like *crazy*, use *you're* not *your*.
- × Is that you're coat?
- ✓ Is that your coat?
- ? When you want to indicate possession, use *your*. *You're* is the contracted form of *you + are*.

False Cognates

False cognates or *faux amis* are words in one language that look similar to words in another language but have different meanings and uses. In this guide, **English words are red**. Les mots en français sont en bleu.

Cognates	In French	In English
Actuellement	Je travaille <u>actuellement</u> sur un projet.	I am currently working on a project
Actually	<u>En fait</u> , je ne peux pas le faire.	Actually , I can't do it.
Assister	J'ai <u>assisté</u> à la classe.	I attended the class.
Assist	J'ai <u>aidé</u> l'enseignant.	I assisted the teacher.
Attendre	J'ai <u>attendu</u> pendant vingt minutes.	I waited for twenty minutes.
Blesser	Ils ont <u>blesé</u> des gens.	They hurt people.
Bless	Le prêtre a <u>béni</u> notre enfant.	The priest blessed our child.
Caractère	Ce meuble a du <u>caractère</u> .	This piece of furniture has character .
Character	Romeo est un <u>personnage</u> tragique.	Romeo is a tragic character .
Chance	Je n'ai pas eu <u>l'occasion</u> de dire au revoir.	I didn't have the chance to say goodbye.
Chance	J'ai eu de la <u>chance</u> .	I was lucky .
Déception	Les résultats du vote ont été une <u>déception</u> .	The results of the vote were a disappointment .
Deception	Le rapport de la CDC était une <u>tromperie</u> .	The CDC's intelligence report was a deception .
Demander	Elle m'a <u>demandé</u> d'apporter son livre.	She asked me to bring her book.
Demand	Elle a <u>exigé</u> que je trouve son livre.	She demand ed that I find her book.
Déranger	Excusez-moi de vous <u>déranger</u> .	I am sorry to bother you.
Derange	Les terroristes sont des <u>malades mentaux</u> .	Terrorists are mentally deranged .
Avoir envie	Je n'ai pas <u>envie</u> de manger.	I don't feel like eating.
Envy	Je n' <u>envie</u> pas la petite amie de Jack, il n'est pas fidèle.	I don't envy Jack's girlfriend. He's so unfaithful.
Éventuellement	Vous pouvez <u>éventuellement</u> prendre ma bicyclette si vous en avez besoin.	You can even take my bike if you need it.
Eventually	<u>Un jour</u> , je vais finir par postuler pour ce poste.	I will send the job application eventually .
Expérience	J'ai beaucoup d' <u>expérience</u> dans ce domaine.	I have a lot of experience in this field.
Experiment	J'ai fait une <u>expérience</u> .	I did an experiment .
Défaut	Mon grand <u>défaut</u> c'est ma générosité excessive.	My biggest fault is my excessive generosity.
Default	Le mot de passe pour le système est « admin » par <u>défaut</u> .	The default system password is "admin".
Formation	Les stagiaires reçoivent une <u>formation</u> générale.	Interns receive general training .
Formation	On connaît peu de <u>mécanismes</u> de synthèse pour la <u>formation</u> de la thyroglobuline.	Little is known of the synthetic mechanisms for the formation of thyroglobulin.
Formidable	Ce groupe est <u>formidable</u> !	This is a great band!
Formidable	Il était un adversaire <u>redoutable</u> .	He was a formidable opponent.
Gentil	Elle a un mot <u>gentil</u> pour tous ceux qu'elle rencontre.	She has a kind word for everyone she meets.
Gentle	Mon dentiste était très <u>doux</u> . Je n'ai rien senti.	My dentist was very gentle . I didn't feel anything.
Gros	C'est un <u>gros</u> problème.	That's a big problem.
Gross	Quelle est cette odeur <u>dégoûtante</u> ?	What is that gross smell?

Cognates	In French	In English
Ignorer	J' <u>ignore</u> tout de ce sujet.	I know nothing about this subject.
Ignore	Je <u>ne tiens aucun compte</u> de ce que les politiciens disent pendant les élections.	I ignore what politicians say during elections.
Librairie	J'ai acheté mon dictionnaire à la <u>librairie</u> .	I bought my dictionary at the bookstore .
Library	J'ai emprunté ce roman à la <u>bibliothèque</u> .	I borrowed this novel from the library .
Monnaie	En prison, les cigarettes sont utilisées comme <u>monnaie</u> .	In prison, cigarettes are used as currency .
Money	J'ai besoin d'un meilleur travail pour que je puisse <u>gagner plus d'argent</u> .	I need a better job so that I can earn more money .
Occasion	J'ai acheté une voiture <u>d'occasion</u> .	I bought a used car.
Occasion	Leur mariage sera certainement une <u>occasion</u> mémorable.	Their wedding will certainly be a memorable occasion .
Opportun	Ils discutaient à savoir s'il était <u>opportun</u> de déclencher des élections au printemps.	They were discussing the appropriateness of calling a spring election.
Opportunity	C'est une bonne <u>occasion</u> de faire un investissement stratégique.	This is a good opportunity to make a strategic investment.
Professeur	Il est mon <u>professeur</u> d'anglais au collège.	He is my English teacher at college.
Professor	Il est <u>professeur</u> de psychologie à l'université.	He is a professor of Psychology at university.
Publicité	J'ai vu une <u>publicité</u> hilarante à la télévision hier.	I saw a hilarious advertisement on television yesterday.
Publicity	Nous avons organisé une manifestation nue pour <u>augmenter la visibilité</u> de notre cause.	We staged a protest in the nude to get more publicity for our cause.
Quitter	J'ai <u>quitté</u> le travail plus tôt que d'habitude aujourd'hui.	I left work earlier than usual today.
Quit	J'ai <u>démissionné</u> de mon travail parce que je détestais mon patron.	I quit my job because I hated my boss.
Supporter	Je <u>ne supporte pas</u> les tricheurs.	I can't stand cheaters.
Support	Cette poutre na pas été conçue pour <u>soutenir</u> autant de poids.	This beam was not meant to support so much weight.
Raisin	Elle a cuit mes biscuitsavoine et <u>raisins</u> favoris.	She baked my favourite oatmeal raisin cookies.
Grape	Le champagne est un vin mousseux produit à partir de <u>raisins</u> cultivés dans la région de Champagne en France.	Champagne is a sparkling wine produced from grapes grown in the Champagne region of France.
Réaliser	Il a <u>réalisé</u> son rêve de devenir un joueur de hockey professionnel.	He achieved his lifelong dream to become a professional hockey player.
Realize	Il a <u>pris conscience</u> de son erreur après que l'examen était terminé.	He realized his mistake after the exam was over.
Rester	Elle est <u>restée</u> à la maison.	She stayed home.
Rest	Il est important de <u>se reposer</u> avant le grand match.	It is important to rest before the big game.
Réunion	J'étais en retard à la <u>réunion</u> départementale.	I was late for the department meeting .
Reunion	Après avoir vécu à l'étranger pendant vingt ans, John est revenu au Canada pour une <u>réunion</u> d'anciens élèves.	Having lived abroad for twenty years, John returned to Canada for a school reunion .

Revision Strategies

Your first idea is probably not your best idea, and your first draft is probably not your best draft. Revise. Revision helps you create a better text now and helps you become a better writer over time by developing revision as a skill.

Revision Checklist

1. Have you located and assembled your resources?

- ☐ Check that you have a dictionary, style guide, verb reference, and checklists.

2. Does your text match the request?

- ☐ If you have been asked to write an essay, a report, a letter or a story, check that you have in fact written an essay, a report, a letter, or a story. It may seem obvious, but people often do not take the time to read instructions or requests as carefully as they should.
- ☐ Check your format. If you have been asked to type, double-space, or use a cover-page, check that your work matches style requirements.
- ☐ Some departments require all written communication to conform to a particular style. Check that your sources are properly cited and that your reference list contains all of the sources you have cited in your text.

3. Is the text properly structured?

- ☐ Check that your sentences start with a capital letter and end with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark.
- ☐ Check that introductory elements are separated by a comma.
- ☐ Check that compound sentences are joined with a comma and a coordinator.
- ☐ Check that you have appropriate headings for your text and sections, and that your name appears on your work. Give your text a title, a subject line, and headings.
- ☐ Check that you have broken your text into paragraphs and indented where appropriate.
- ☐ Check that each paragraph has a topic sentence that controls and limits the scope of the paragraph.
- ☐ Check that paragraphs contain the proper transition words to show how ideas are related to each other.

4. Have you checked your spelling, grammar and vocabulary using *ESL Power-Tools*?

- ☐ Use the built-in grammar and spell-checker on your computer. Change the language of the document to English.
- ☐ Check for ESL errors. Use the VirtualWritingTutor.com to check for common second-language errors
- ☐ Check your word choice. Use FieldRelated.com to check for vocabulary related to your field of study and to check for conversational or academic vocabulary.

5. Have you checked your text for avoidable errors and false cognates?

- ☐ Study the examples in the **Avoidable Errors** to help you identify and correct common errors.
- ☐ Review the list of **False Cognates** and make sure you have not used any of the listed words incorrectly.
- ☐ Cover your text with a piece of blank paper, and lower it down one line at a time to force yourself to read carefully for errors.
- ☐ Read your text backwards. Start at the end and read each sentence backwards and forwards to check for mistakes.

6. Have you asked someone to proofread your text?

- ☐ Find a classmate to check your text for errors. Everyone, no matter how well they write, needs a proofreader.

7. Have you reviewed the corrective feedback provided by your teacher?

- ☐ Check that you have eliminated the errors identified in the corrective feedback on earlier drafts of this assignment or on previous assignments. Teachers, editors and bosses do not like to correct the same error twice.

8. Have you checked the appropriate **STYLE GUIDE** for **APA, MLA and CMOS requirements**?

- ☐ Check that you have used the APA style for general ESL writing, MLA for writing about English Literature and the Humanities, and CMOS for History, Philosophy, Anthropology and Theology.

Style Guides

APA Style: English Second Language (ESL) studies are part of the field of Education and Educational Psychology. As such, research reports written in this field should conform to the American Psychological Association (APA) style requirements. Search the internet using the search terms, “APA style guide” for help with citations and reference lists.

MLA Style: English Literature studies are part of the Humanities. As such, literary analyses written in this field should conform to the Modern Language Association of America (MLA). Search the internet using the search terms, “MLA style guide” for help with citations and reference lists.

CMOS Style: History, Philosophy, Anthropology and Theology all use the Chicago Manual of Style. Search the internet using the search terms, “Chicago manual of style” for help with citations and reference lists.

Commas

There are five types of comma: the listing comma, the connecting comma, the parasitic comma, the interrupting comma, and the add-on comma.

1. A listing comma can always be replaced by the word *and* or *or*:

Choose an article from the Gazette, the National Post, or the Globe and Mail.

Choose an article from the Gazette or the National Post or the Globe and Mail.

2. A connecting comma must be followed by one of the connecting words: *and*, *or*, *but*, *so*, *yet* or *while*.

The cheque was due last week, but it hasn't arrived yet.

The roads in Quebec have a lot of potholes, while the roads in Ontario are smooth.

3. A parasitic comma indicates that you have added on a phrase that borrows words that appeared earlier in the sentence.

Russia is the largest country in the world and China, the most populous.

Russia is the largest country in the world. China is the most populous.

4. Interrupting commas always come in pairs and surround interruptions to the sentence.

My father, who loved music, always kept the radio on in the house.

A tunnel, during the day, is a short night.

5. An add-on comma sets off an introductory or closing element.

In the beginning, there was light.

That bus just ran me over, almost.

Comma errors

1. A comma splice is a joining comma without a conjunction. This must be avoided.

Incorrect: Dogs can improve your health, they help you get more exercise.

Correct: Dogs can improve your health. They help you get more exercise.

2. Do not use a comma before *because* or *since*.

Incorrect: The professor asked the student, because he raised his hand.

Incorrect: The professor asked the student, since he raised his hand.

Correct: The professor asked the student because he raised his hand.

The Essayist's Checklist

- 1. Choose a purpose:** Which question will you answer with your essay? The question you attempt to answer will determine your purpose.
 - *What isn't what it appears to be?* Purpose = to inform
 - *What situation needs to change?* Purpose = to persuade
 - *How have I been wronged?* Purpose = to confide
- 2. Select a role:** Decide how you will approach your topic. Will you inform the reader as a pundit or a philosopher? Will you persuade the reader as an enthusiast, a scold, or a Devil's advocate? Will you confide in the reader as a confidant? Will you entertain the reader with a story as a raconteur? Or will you amuse the reader by informing, persuading or confiding in the reader in an ironic or absurd way as a jester does?
 - **Pundit:** The pundit teaches us something by drawing on his or her knowledge of or expertise on a topic.
 - **Philosopher:** A philosopher searches for knowledge or meaning by asking questions about and proposing solutions to the moral problems of life
 - **Enthusiast:** The enthusiast stirs up enthusiasm on a topic in the face of apathy or weak support.
 - **Scold:** A scold is a faultfinder. He or she will criticize, reproach, quarrel and complain about someone or something. A scold does so with the hope that criticism will eventually result in reform.
 - **Devil's advocate:** A Devil's advocate takes the contrary point of view to anything and everything. By trying to prove the opposite of a widely accepted belief, he or she helps us to re-examine that belief so we might articulate it more clearly, or look on it in a fresh light.
 - **Confidant:** A confidant reveals his or her feelings on a topic. By articulating hidden emotions, we discover that all of our secrets are essentially the same.
 - **Raconteur:** A raconteur tells a story to entertain or inform. He or she personalizes problems making them more accessible to others.
 - **Jester:** A jester makes light of things the world takes seriously. He or she points out the ridiculous to relieve pent up anxiety through laughter.
- 3. Generate interest in your topic:** Select a strategy for generating interest in your topic. Ask a question, introduce a surprising fact or statistic, quote an authority, share an anecdote, or outline an opposing view.
- 4. Define and limit your topic:** Make sure that you define your terms and indicate what is not covered by your topic. This will help to keep your topic focused. For example, "An abortion is the deliberate termination of a pregnancy. It is different from a miscarriage, which is the spontaneous end of a pregnancy before term."
- 5. State your thesis:** Develop a clear and concise main idea in the form of a thesis statement. A thesis statement is a sentence that identifies the purpose of the essay. It usually appears at the end of the introductory paragraph and serves as the organizing principle of the essay. Thesis statements can be either strong or weak. A strong thesis statement makes a claim and summarizes support for it: X is Y because A, B, and C; or X should be Y because A, B, and C. A weak thesis statement is self-conscious in that it makes reference to either the essay in which it appears or to the essayist writing it. Weak theses often follow this formula: *In this essay, I will show that X is Y because A, B, and C.*
- 6. Organize your essay:** Arrange your body paragraphs so that they develop the topics in the same order as they are outlined in your thesis statement. Arrange your arguments from strongest to weakest or weakest to strongest. Write an outline of your essay to help you arrange and organize your ideas.
- 7. Develop your paragraphs:** Each paragraph should be developed using a single development method. When you change methods, change paragraphs.
 - **Example:** The example method is the simplest method of development. Each sentence provides examples to support the controlling idea in the topic sentence of the paragraph.
 - **Cause and effect:** Like the example method, the topic sentence identifies a cause, and each sentence thereafter provides examples of effects. Alternatively, the topic sentence identifies the result, and each subsequent sentence lists the causes for it.
 - **Comparison by criterion:** A paragraph developed using comparison by criterion involves comparing items one criterion at a time. For example, you might describe the size of item 1 and the size of item 2, shape of item 1 and the shape of item 2, the price of item 1 and the price of item 2, etc.
 - **Comparison by item:** A paragraph developed using comparison by item involves describing item 1 using a variety of criteria, like size, shape, and price, etc., before describing item 2 in terms the same criteria of size, shape, and price, etc.
 - **Narration:** A paragraph developed by narration involves a description of a series of events that happened in the past in the sequence in which they occurred.
 - **Process analysis:** A paragraph developed by process analysis describes a repeatable series of steps using words like first, next, etc.
 - **Description:** When you are writing about an object or scene and want to consider its physical or spatial characteristics, you will want to compose a paragraph of descriptive details. Introduce details in a sequence, moving from top to bottom, left to right, center to periphery, large to small, east to west, and so on. Be systematic.
 - **Classification:** A paragraph developed by classification analyzes the components of an item or an idea.
 - **Definition:** When you develop a paragraph by definition, you will identify a class and then list differentiating characteristics.
- 8. Use transition words:** Use the words below to show the relationship of ideas from one sentence or paragraph to the next.
 - **Exemplification:** *to illustrate, for instance, for example*
 - **Emphasis:** *in fact, most significantly, specifically, in particular*
 - **Addition:** *furthermore, moreover, in addition*
 - **Contrast:** *although, however, even so, nevertheless, conversely, yet*
 - **Qualification:** *for the most part, generally, often, of course*
 - **Sequence:** *first, second, third, next, subsequently*
 - **Conclusion:** *in conclusion, to conclude, finally, to sum up*
- 9. Develop a conclusion:** Restate your thesis by rewording or rearranging the words in your thesis. This will remind the reader what you have been trying to achieve. Include a concrete suggestion. What should the reader do now? Finally, make a prediction about the benefits of adopting your proposal. What will happen if enough people accept your point of view? How will things change?