

Grammar Refresher

UHCL Writing Center

Adapted from EasyWriter Resources, Andrea A. Lunsford,
(<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/easywriter3e/20errors/default.asp>)

1) Missing comma after an introductory element

- ▶ Determined to get the job done, we worked all weekend.
- ▶ In German, nouns are always capitalized.

2) Vague pronoun reference

POSSIBLE REFERENCE TO MORE THAN ONE WORD

- ▶ Transmitting radio signals by satellite is a way of overcoming the problem of scarce airwaves and limiting how *the airwaves* ~~they~~ are used.
^

REFERENCE IMPLIED BUT NOT STATED

- ▶ The company prohibited smoking, *a policy* ~~which~~ many employees resented.
^

3) Missing comma in a compound sentence

- ▶ The words "I do" may sound simple, but they mean a life commitment.

4) Wrong word

- ▶ *Paradise Lost* contains many ~~illusions~~^{allusions} to classical mythology.

- ▶ Working at a computer all day often means being ~~sedate~~^{sedentary} for long periods of time.

5) Missing comma(s) with extra information

- ▶ Marina, who was the president of the club, was first to speak.

6) Wrong or missing verb ending

- ▶ The United States ~~drop~~^{dropped} an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.[^]

7) Wrong or missing preposition

▶ We met ^{on}~~in~~ Union Street ⁱⁿ San Francisco.

▶ President Richard Nixon compared the United States ^{to}~~with~~ a “pitiful, helpless giant.”

8) Comma splice

- ▶ Westward migration had passed Wyoming by, even the discovery of gold in nearby Montana failed to attract settlers.
- ▶ I was strongly attracted to her, she had special qualities.
- ▶ We hated the meat loaf, the cafeteria served it every Friday.

9) Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe

- ▶ Overambitious parents can be very harmful to a ^{child's} ~~childs~~ well-being.
- ▶ Pedro Martinez is one of the ^{Mets'} ~~Met's~~ most electrifying pitchers.

10) Unnecessary shift in tense

- ▶ A few countries produce almost all of the world's illegal drugs, but addiction ~~affected~~ ^{affects} many countries.
^
- ▶ Priya was watching the great blue heron take off. Then she ~~slips~~ ^{slipped} and ~~falls~~ ^{fell} into the swamp.
^ ^

11) Unnecessary shift in pronoun

- ▶ When one first sees a painting by Georgia O'Keeffe, ~~you are~~ impressed by a sense of power and stillness.

12) Sentence fragment

NO SUBJECT

- ▶ Marie Antoinette spent huge sums of money on herself and her favorites. ^{Her extravagance} ~~And~~ helped bring on the French Revolution.

NO COMPLETE VERB

- ▶ The old aluminum boat ^{was} sitting on its trailer.

13) Wrong tense or verb form

- ▶ By the time Ian arrived, Jill ^{had} died.
^

14) Lack of subject-verb agreement

- ▶ A strategist behind the scenes ^{creates} ~~create~~ the candidate's public image.

- ▶ There ^{are} ~~is~~ two main reasons that I want to become a lawyer.

15) Missing comma in a series

- ▶ Sharks eat mostly squid, shrimp, crabs, and other fish.

16) Lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent

▶ Each of the puppies thrived in ^{its}~~their~~ new home.
^

▶ Every student must provide his ^{or her} own uniform.
^

17) Unnecessary comma(s) with a restrictive element

- ▶ People, who wanted to preserve wilderness areas, opposed the plan to privatize national parks.

18) Run-on/ fused sentence

- ▶ The current was swift. ^{He} he could not swim to shore.
^
- ▶ Klee's paintings seem simple, ^{but} they are very sophisticated.
^
- ▶ ^{Although she} She doubted the value of meditation, she decided
^ ^
to try it once.

19) Misplaced or dangling modifier

MISPLACED MODIFIER

- With binoculars, the*
▶ ~~The~~ hikers could see the eagles swooping and diving.
^
~~with binoculars.~~

20) Its/It's confusion

- ▶ The car is lying on ^{its} ~~it's~~ side in the ditch. ~~Its~~ ^{It's} a white 2006 Passat.