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 they are used.

REFERENCE IMPLIED BUT NOT STATED

- The company prohibited smoking, 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 allusions to classical mythology.

Working at a computer all day often means being sedentary and sedate 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 *dropped* an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.
7) **Wrong or missing preposition**

- We met in Union Street San Francisco.
- President Richard Nixon compared the United States to 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 well-being.
- Pedro Martinez is one of the Mets' most electrifying pitchers.
10) **Unnecessary shift in tense**

- A few countries produce almost all of the world’s illegal drugs, but addiction affects many countries.

- Priya was watching the great blue heron take off. Then she slips and falls 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. *And helped bring on the* Her extravagance 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 the candidate’s public image.

- There 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 their new home.
- Every student must provide his 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 could not swim to shore.

- Klee’s paintings seem simple, 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 side in the ditch. It's a white 2006 Passat.