

The College Guide to Brushing Up On Grammar and Style

We all remember diagramming sentences in middle school, but before we enter college, we rarely think about the effect that sentence structures and grammatical constructions have on our ability to express ourselves. As you face the challenges of writing at a college level, you will probably find that your stylistic constructions and grammatical skills are being pushed to their limits. The more complex information you present to your readers, the more important grammar and style become.

This packet gives you the opportunity to address your own writing needs. Some sections will be easier for you to complete than others. Looking for examples of errors in your own writing will help you identify the errors with which you struggle most and develop new editing strategies to eliminate the errors from your writing.

Think of Writing Center tutors as your guides to becoming a more self-sufficient editor. Use the terminology presented in this packet during sessions at the Writing Center, and ask tutors to help you eliminate your most frequent errors. Doing so will allow you to have more efficient Writing Center appointments and to hone your own self-editing skills.

1. Subject Consistency between Clauses

Make your sentences easy on your readers. Ensure that the subject of your dependent clause and the subject of your independent clause are consistent. Use the following steps to identify and correct subject inconsistency:

- ✓ Identify the sentence's clauses. A clause is a word group containing a subject, a verb, and any objects, complements, or modifiers.
 - Independent clauses can stand alone as sentences.
 - Dependent clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions and cannot stand alone as sentences.
 - The most common subordinating conjunctions are *after, although, as, as if, because, before, even though, if, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, and while.*
- ✓ Identify the clauses' subjects. A subject is the word or word group that names who or what the sentence is about. The subject precedes the verb.
- ✓ If the clauses' subjects are different, choose the subject that you want to emphasize. Which subject are you trying to make a point about?
- ✓ Change one subject to coordinate with the other.

Example sentence: While Krikorian does not argue against legal immigration, the immigrants that are coming to the United States illegally are coming for the same reasons as legal immigrants.

- ✓ The sentence is composed of two clauses. "While Krikorian does not argue against legal immigration" is a dependent clause. "The immigrants that are coming to the United States illegally are coming for the same reasons as legal immigrants" is an independent clause.
- ✓ "Krikorian" is the subject of the first clause, and "The immigrants that are coming to the United States illegally" is the subject of the second clause.
- ✓ The writer wants to emphasize "Krikorian."
- ✓ The writer changes the subject of the independent clause to be "he" (Krikorian).

Revised sentence: While **Krikorian** does not argue against legal immigration, **he** overlooks the fact that illegal immigrants come to the United States for the same reasons as legal immigrants.

Exercises: Edit the following sentences to ensure subject consistency between clauses.

Though the white-tailed deer are beautiful animals, crops and woodlands suffer due to deer overpopulation.

When hikers encounter scrape lines on trees in the forest, deer probably live in the area.

Although white-tailed deer are not native to Scandinavia, Europeans introduced the species to Finland in the mid-nineteenth century.

While people believe that only male deer, or bucks, have antlers, female deer have been known to occasionally develop antlers, too, which surprises people.

As deer age, people measure their snouts and assess their coat color to determine their age.

Application: Record examples of inconsistent subject coordination from your own writing, or write your own sentences with subject coordination errors. Correct and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

2. Misplaced Modifiers

A modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes another part of the sentence. A misplaced modifier does not logically refer to the other part of the sentence it is supposed to describe. Use the following steps to identify and correct a misplaced modifier:

- ✓ Identify the modifiers by finding words, phrases, or clauses that describe a different part of the sentence
- ✓ Check to see if the modifier logically refers to the part of the sentence it is supposed to be describing. Is the noun or subject of the modifier clear? What is the modifier supposed to refer to? What does the modifier actually refer to?

- ✓ Simply rearranging the sentence will not fix this issue if the subject is not clear. You may have to include another subject or noun for the modifier to refer to. Rewrite the sentence so that the modifier clearly refers to its subject. Try to place the modifier as close to its subject as you can.

Example Sentence: I saw a quarter walking home.

- ✓ Identify the modifier: I saw a quarter **walking home**.
- ✓ What is *walking home* supposed to refer to? I
- ✓ What does *walking home* actually refer to in this sentence? The quarter.
- ✓ Clarify the relationship between *walking home* and its intended subject, *I*.
As I walked home, I saw a quarter.

Notice how I had to include the subject, *I*, twice to clarify the meaning of the sentence. Now we know that I was walking home, not the quarter.

Revised Sentence: As I walked home, I saw a quarter.

Exercises: Fix the misplaced modifiers in the following sentences

I saw a deer on the way to work.

After napping for an hour, the alarm woke me up.

The professor gave a lecture on endangered species, writing on the dry-erase board.

I love the cake I got from my mom with teal frosting.

Covered with pictures of spiders, Shirley did not want to step inside Chuck's room.

Application: Record examples of misplaced modifiers from your own writing in the space provided, or create your own sentences with misplaced modifiers. Correct and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

3. Unclear Pronoun Referents

A pronoun is a word that replaces a noun, such as *this*, *that*, *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*, and *me*. Sometimes a sentence loses its intended meaning when a pronoun does not clearly refer to its antecedent (the word it is replacing).

A Note on Beginning Sentences with “This”

When people use “this” as a pronoun, they often use the word to stand in for a complicated antecedent. In general, avoid using “this” as a pronoun. Instead, convert “this” into an adjective and let it modify some noun that more clearly specifies the referent: “this complementary view” or “this scholarly perspective,” for example.

Use the following steps to identify and correct unclear pronoun referents:

- ✓ Circle the pronouns
- ✓ Underline the nouns (potential antecedents) in the sentence
- ✓ Check if the pronouns clearly refer to their antecedents by asking the following questions:
Does the antecedent (in noun-form) exist in the sentence or is it implied? Are the nouns and the pronouns in the same form (plural vs. singular)? Can the pronoun refer to more than once possible antecedent?
- ✓ You must make the antecedent explicit and the relationship between the pronoun and the antecedent clear. Sometimes you need to replace the pronoun with the noun it is replacing (even if the noun is already present in the sentence).

Example Sentence: Brad told Kyle that he left his keys in the car.

- ✓ Circle the pronouns: Brad told Kyle that **he** left **his** keys in the car.
- ✓ Underline the potential antecedents: Brad told Kyle that **he** left **his** keys in the car.
- ✓ Do *he* and *his* clearly refer to their antecedent? No. *He* and *his* can either refer to Brad or Kyle. Who left his keys in the car?
- ✓ Clarify the pronouns: Brad told Kyle that Brad left Kyle’s keys in the car.

Revised Sentence: Brad told Kyle that Brad left Kyle’s keys in the car.

Exercises: Clarify the following pronoun-antecedent relationship (keep in mind that some pronouns may properly refer to their antecedents)

I finished my plate of spaghetti, wiped the sauce from my mouth, and put it in the dishwasher.

When dad took the pan out of the oven, it broke.

The beach umbrella casted a longer shadow as it got later.

Carly reminded Megan that she couldn’t go to the movies because she had a doctor’s appointment.

After the robber stole money from the cashier, he ran away.

Application: Record examples of unclear pronoun referents from your own writing in the space below, or create your own example sentences with unclear pronoun referents. Correct and rewrite each sentence.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

4. Empty Phrasing

Empty phrasing refers to expletive constructions like “it is,” “there are,” “this is,” etc. While these constructions are sometimes necessary for rhythm or emphasis, chances are you will be using the construction to create a more complex, inactive sentence.

- ✓ Identify unnecessary expletive constructions.
- ✓ Identify the sentence’s subject and verb.
- ✓ Move the subject to the beginning of the sentence and eliminate the expletive constructions.

Example Sentence: It is not unknown to many that Henry VIII was married six times.

- ✓ “It is not unknown” is a wordy and awkward expletive construction.
- ✓ The verb is “is not unknown,” which could easily be changed to “know” The subject is “it,” but I think that the writer is talking about how much people know about Henry VIII. Therefore, the subject could be “many people.”

Revised Sentence: Many people know that Henry VIII was married six times.

Exercises: Eliminate the unnecessary constructions or empty phrasing in the following sentences. Rewrite each sentence.

There were two students at my summer camp who had severe psychological problems.

The fact that many counselors were unequipped to deal with students’ disabilities is something that disturbed me.

There was a big orientation meeting at the beginning of the summer, which all the counselors attended, and the counselors still struggled to effectively solve problems that arose throughout the season.

It is partially the camp's responsibility to hire competent employees, but that is an issue that our camp's administration tried to deal with in the best way they knew how.

Next summer, there is hope that the camp's administration will hire more compassionate and qualified counselors.

Application: Record examples of empty phrasing from your writing, or write example sentences with empty phrasing errors. Correct the unnecessary expletive constructions and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

5. Subordinating Elements

Subordination allows students to create complex sentences that express sequence, cause, and other subtle relationships. Subordinating conjunctions and subordinate phrases and clauses save words and strengthen sentences.

- ✓ Examine the relationship between short, choppy sentences.
- ✓ Identify a subordination strategy.
- ✓ Combine the sentences into a complex sentence.

Types of Subordinating Elements

The key to varying sentences for better clarity and meaning is in learning to use different subordinating elements. Try using:

1. An absolute phrase – a word group that modifies a whole clause or sentence, usually consisting of a noun followed by a participle or participial phrase
Example: He was known to have written, **cigarette in mouth**, for hours at a time.
2. An appositive phrase – a noun or noun phrase that renames a nearby noun or pronoun
Example: I often read Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, **my favorite novel**.

3. A prepositional phrase
Example: **Over the river**, to grandmother's house we go.
4. A participial phrase – a phrase beginning with a preposition and ending with a noun or noun equivalent
Example: **Tossing and turning in bed**, the young boy struggled to fall asleep.
5. A gerund phrase – a noun in verb form ending in -ing
Example: He tried **studying late at night**.
6. An infinitive phrase – an infinitive is the word “to” followed by a “verb”
Example: **To talk to her mom** without losing her temper was an accomplishment.
7. A dependent clause
Example: **When he invaded the neighboring country**, he understood the cost of war.
8. An adjective clause
Example: I celebrated Christmas, **which motivated me to put a tree in my living room**.
9. An adverb clause
Example: **Unless she clarifies this assignment**, I will remain confused.
10. A noun clause
Example: **The most exciting thing** about the election was that people were motivated to vote.

Example Sentence: Huntington says that he wants to preserve “Anglo-Protestant” American values. His reveals his provincial and racist point of view.

- ✓ The first sentence is an explanation of the second: Huntington's ideas seem provincial and racist because he says that he wants to preserve “Anglo-Protestant” American values.
- ✓ Inserting a subordinating conjunction before the explanatory clause will clarify the relationship between the ideas.
- ✓ Combine the sentences into one complex sentence. The first sentence, now beginning with “when,” becomes a dependent clause and is connected to the second sentence, an independent clause, with a comma.

Revised Sentence: When Huntington says that he wants to preserve “Anglo-Protestant” American values, he reveals his provincial and racist point of view.

Exercises: Use subordinating elements to combine the following sentences. Rewrite each sentence to show your revision.

Deer hunting is a popular sport in Wisconsin. Hunters use both guns and bows and arrows to hunt deer.

Some deer are marked with radio-collars and metal ear tags. These deer are still legal to hunt.

Those opposed to hunting believe that the sport is cruel, dangerous, and that it promotes violence. Those who hunt believe that the sport is an exciting tradition, an enjoyable excuse to spend time outside, and a safe way to control species overpopulation.

Anyone ten years old or older can now hunt without first taking a hunting training course. An experienced hunter must accompany the beginner hunter.

Everyone born after 1973 must have taken a hunter education course in order to hunt in Wisconsin. Members of the armed forces are exempt from this requirement.

Application: Record examples of your short or choppy sentences, or create example short, choppy sentences. Correct and rewrite the sentences with correct subordination.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

5. Transitional Devices between Sentences

Transitions are essential to establishing coherence between sentences. When writers use transitional elements effectively, their readers should not even notice the words and phrases that connect their ideas.

- ✓ Examine the relationship between two sentences.
- ✓ Ensure that the relationship is clear to readers.
- ✓ Add a transition that correctly describes the relationship between two sentences.

Example Sentence: They took him into their home after his biological mother died and his biological father abandoned his family. John and Francis Allan never legally adopted Edgar Allan Poe. His penname serves as a reminder of his childhood in their home.

- ✓ The three sentences explain the relationship between Edgar Allan Poe and his foster family.
- ✓ In their current form, the sentences do not explicitly help the reader understand the relationship between their content.
- ✓ Add transitions that clarify the relationship between each idea.

Revised Sentence: **Even though** they took him into their home after his biological mother died and his biological father abandoned his family, John and Francis Allan never legally adopted Edgar Allan Poe. His penname, **therefore**, serves as a reminder of his childhood in their home.

Exercises: Add transition words and transitional phrases to the following sentences and sentence groups. Rewrite the sentences.

Young Poe chose to enlist in the army to support himself. He lied about his age and entered under a false name.

Poe left the United States Army to enroll in West Point. He did not remain in the service for long. Poe was court-marshaled. He returned to New York City to continue writing full-time.

Many nineteenth century American writers relied on a second source of income to supplement their literary pursuits. Poe attempted to earn a living on his own. He eventually found financial hardship.

Poe's work generated praise from renowned writers like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of *Sherlock Holmes*. Other writers of Poe's time found his demeanor coarse and his work vulgar. Poe suffered much negative criticism.

Poe is most famous for his works of Gothic fiction and poetry. Poe wrote in many different genres such as satire, science fiction, and literary criticism.

Application: Record examples from your writing where you need to add transitional elements, or create example sentences that require transitional elements. Correct and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

7. Choice of Prepositions

A preposition describes a relationship between other words in a sentence. In itself, a preposition (like "in," for example) is rather meaningless and difficult to define in words. Prepositions are almost always combined with other words in prepositional phrases. All prepositional phrases tend to be built similarly: a preposition followed by a determiner and an adjective or two, followed by a pronoun or noun (called the *object* of the preposition). The whole phrase serves a modifying role and acts as an adjective or adverb, locating something in space and time, modifying a noun, or telling when or where or under what conditions something happened.

Prepositions of Time: *at, on, and in*

1. We use *at* to designate specific times.
 - The train arrives *at* 3:30 p.m.
2. We use *on* to designate days and dates.
 - My brother is visiting *on* Monday.
 - We are having a party *on* the Fourth of July.
3. We use *in* for nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year.
 - She likes to jog *in* the morning.
 - It's too cold to run *in* the winter.
 - He started the job *in* 1971.
 - He is going to quit *in* August.

Prepositions of Place: *at, on, and in*

1. We use *at* for specific addresses.
 - She lives *at* 4108 Pine Road.
2. We use *on* to designate names of streets, avenues, etc.
 - Her house is *on* Pine Road.
3. We use *in* for the name of land-areas (towns, counties, countries, and continents).
 - She lives *in* Durham.
 - Durham is *in* Windham County.
 - Windham County is *in* Connecticut.

Prepositions of Time: *for and since*

1. We use *for* when we measure time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years)
 - He held his breath *for* thirty seconds.
 - She has worked there *for* eight years.
 - The British and Irish have been quarrelling *for* *seven* centuries.
2. We use *since* with specific dates and times.
 - He has worked here *since* 1994.
 - She has been sitting in the waiting room *since* 2:30 p.m.

Unnecessary Prepositions

We sometimes fall into bad habits and use prepositions where they are not necessary. It would be a good idea to eliminate these words altogether, but we must be especially careful not to use them in formal, academic prose.

- She met ~~up with~~ the new coach in the hallway.
- The book fell off ~~of~~ the desk.
- He threw the book out ~~of~~ the window.
- She wouldn't let the cat inside ~~of~~ the house. [or use "in"]
- Where did they go ~~to~~?
- Put the lamp in back of the couch. [use "behind" instead of "in back of"]
- Where is your college ~~at~~?

Exercises: Fix the incorrect prepositions. Rewrite the sentences with correct preposition usage.

The American Civil War is one of the first wars that historians have photographic evidence on.

Mathew Brady assembled a group of field photographers who he documented the Civil War with.

Up until 1862, when he joined Alexander Gardner's photography studio, Timothy O'Sullivan worked in the field.

When historians look on photographs from the Civil War, they wonder whether the photographers staged the image.

Photographic technology of the time prevented photographers from taking photos of anything outside of still scenes, so camp scenes, preparations for or retreat from action, and aftermaths of battle were common images.

Application: Use your own sentences to record examples of incorrect preposition use, or create sentences with incorrect preposition usage. Correct and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

8. Comma Splices

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses (a word group that includes both a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence) are joined with a comma. This creates a run-on sentence. The most effective ways of correcting comma splices is to add a conjunction, replace the comma with a semi-colon, or create two separate sentences. Use the following steps to identify and correct comma splices:

- ✓ Circle the commas in a sentence.
- ✓ Read each part of the sentence aloud. Do any of these commas connect two clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences? If more than one part of the sentence could stand independently, you have a comma splice.
- ✓ Clarify the relationship between the separate parts of the sentence through a conjunction, period, or semi-colon.

A Note on Conjunctive Adverbs

Sometimes confused with subordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs MUST BE used with semicolons to connect independent clauses. A conjunctive adverb should always be followed by a

comma. The most commonly used conjunctive adverbs are *consequently, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, then, therefore, and thus*.

Example Sentence: Michael refused to purchase the updated version of his chemistry textbook, therefore, he completed the wrong homework problems.

- ✓ The conjunctive adverb “therefore” is followed by a comma.
- ✓ Identify the types of clauses that “therefore” connects. “Therefore” connects two independent clauses: “He refused to purchase the updated version of his chemistry textbook” and “He completed the wrong homework problems.”
- ✓ A conjunctive adverb cannot hold two independent clauses together with a comma. Add a semicolon before “therefore” to eliminate the comma splice.

Revised Sentence: Michael refused to purchase the updated version of his chemistry textbook; therefore, he completed the wrong homework problems.

Exercises: Fix the following comma splices

Most of the students are excited for summer, Nick is not.

The winters are getting colder, the summers are getting hotter.

She did not want to walk the dog, she would rather watch a movie.

Most people think Ellen and Tina are twins, Ellen, however, has dark brown hair while Tina has blond hair.

The economy is getting worse, more stores are closing.

Application: Record examples of comma splices from your own writing, or create your own examples of sentences with comma splices. Correct and revise the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

9. Stringy Sentences

Sometimes sentences are grammatically correct but are still wordy and awkward. Stringy sentences result when you want to include too many ideas in one sentence. Though stringy sentences are often grammatically correct, they contain too much information for one sentence.

- ✓ Circle prepositional phrases and coordinating conjunctions (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*). If you have more than two prepositional phrases or coordinating conjunctions, you might have a stringy sentence on your hands.
- ✓ Break the sentence into clauses.
- ✓ Consider separating the clauses into two or more sentences.
- ✓ Examine the relationship between sentences and add transition elements.

Example Sentence: **Since** the DREAM Act could be debated indefinitely **and** many **of the people** who could benefit from it may be deported **before it takes effect**, there should be an amendment **on the law** that allows those who would have benefited, **but** were deported **before the law was passed**, to be allowed to come back to the United States.

- ✓ While the sentence is grammatically correct, it contains three conjunctions and multiple prepositional phrases.
- ✓ “Since the DREAM Act could be debated indefinitely and many of the people who could benefit from it may be deported before it takes effect” is a dependent clause. “There should be an amendment on the law that allows those who have benefited, but were deported before the way was passed, to be allowed to come back to the United States” is an independent clause.
- ✓ Separate the two clauses into two separate sentences.
- ✓ Link the sentences together with “therefore.”

Revised Sentence: Since the Dream Act could be debated indefinitely, many of the people who could benefit from the law may be deported before it takes effect. Therefore, there should be an amendment to the law that allows those who would have benefited, but were deported before the law was passed, to be allowed to come back to the United States.

Exercises: Revise the following stringy sentences. Rewrite the new sentences below.

The liberal arts college is a good choice for me because it is ranked in the top ten institutions among small colleges for the number of graduates who pursue Ph.D. programs in environmental engineering, and environmental engineering is a field in which I see myself excelling and enjoying my work.

When people think of pollution and the negative impact that humankind has on the natural environment, many consider air and water pollution to be the most destructive, but noise pollution is also a harmful consequence of industrialization and compromises the quality of human and animal life.

While some environmental engineers trace the origins of their profession back to the mid-twentieth century, many other environmental engineers correctly acknowledge that their profession was developed in the ancient world when civilizations began using sewage systems to maintain clean and healthy living environments and that the roots of their discipline are woven into the roots of human civilization itself.

Large-scale conservation movements, efforts to care for and preserve nature, accelerated in the United States in the early twentieth century when President Franklin Roosevelt created the National Park Service, and ever since, Americans have become increasingly aware of the diverse, natural beauty of the United States, and as a consequence, Americans sought occupations that worked to preserve their country's natural beauty.

Undergraduates with an interest in physics and chemistry and an inclination to do conservation work should consider pursuing careers in environmental engineering because new technologies that change people's relationship to their environment are being developed everyday, and the field of environmental engineering is constantly changing and evolving, so work in environmental engineering is challenging, interesting, and important.

Application: Find examples of stringy sentences in your work from this semester and copy them below, or create your own stringy sentences. Correct and rewrite the sentences below.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

10. Semicolon Abuse

Semicolons are tricky. On one hand, they provide an interesting stylistic choice for linking independent clauses. On the other hand, semicolons – even when used grammatically correctly – can suggest unfounded and confusing relationships between ideas.

Semicolons are grammatically appropriate in the following situations:

1. Between independent clauses: Use a semicolon between independent clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction
2. Between items in a series when the items already contain punctuation

Semicolons are **not used correctly in the following situations:**

1. Between independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
2. Between an independent clause and a subordinate clause
3. Between an appositive (noun or phrase that renames another noun or pronoun) and the word it renames

4. To introduce a list

A Note on Stylistically Inappropriate Semicolon Use

Semicolons are not always the best way to link two independent clauses. Semicolons should only be used when the two independent clauses are of *equal grammatical rank*, meaning that both independent clauses are structured in the same way and that the information they convey is of equal importance. Before linking two independent clauses with a semicolon, ensure that both clauses share a grammatical structure and communicate information of equal importance.

How to identify and correct a misplaced semicolon in the situations stated above:

1. Between independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction

- ✓ Look for sentences that include a semicolon that is next to a coordinating conjunction
- ✓ Read each part of the sentence separately (ignore the conjunction and semicolon for now). Can these clauses stand on their own as separate sentences?
- ✓ If yes, either omit the conjunction or replace the semicolon with a comma.
- ✓ Note that although semicolons should not be used with coordinating conjunctions, they can be used with conjunctive adverbs or transitional phrases such as *however*, *rather*, or *for example*.

Example: Many actresses lined up to audition for the starring role; but only a handful looked the part.

- ✓ Identify a sentence that includes a semicolon that is next to a coordinating conjunction: Many actresses lined up to audition for the starring role; **but** only a handful looked the part.
- ✓ Read each part of the sentence separately. Can they stand alone?
- ✓ Many actresses lined up to audition for the starring role—**yes**
- ✓ Only a handful looked the part—**yes**
- ✓ Many actresses lined up to audition for the starring role, **but** only a handful looked the part.

2. Between an independent clause and a subordinate clause

- ✓ Read each part of the sentence separately (using the semicolon as the “dividing line”). Can each part of the sentence stand as its own sentence and remain grammatically correct?
- ✓ If no, replace the semicolon with a comma.

Example: Although the car crash clogged the roads; the traffic did not cause any more accidents.

- ✓ Read each part of the sentence separately. Can each part stand alone?
Although a car crash clogged the road—**no (subordinate clause)**
The traffic did not cause any more accidents—**yes (independent clause)**.
- ✓ Although the car crash clogged the roads, the traffic did not cause any more accidents.

3. Between an appositive and the word it renames

- ✓ Read each part of the sentence separately (using the semicolon as the “dividing line”). Can each part of the sentence stand as its own sentence and remain grammatically correct?

- ✓ If no, replace the semicolon with a comma.

Example: Karl will not be on time for dinner because he is reading his favorite science-fiction novel; *Fahrenheit 451*.

- ✓ Read each part of the sentence separately. Can each part stand on its own?
Karl will not be on time for dinner because he is reading his reading his favorite science-fiction novel—**yes**
Fahrenheit 451—**no** (renames *novel*)

4. To introduce a list

A. If the semicolon introduces a list, replace it with a colon.

Example: My favorite outdoor activities include the following; hiking, camping, skiing, swimming, and parasailing.

- ✓ My favorite outdoor activities include the following: hiking, camping, skiing, swimming, and parasailing.

Exercises: Correct the semicolon abuse below

Brittney desperately wants to take a vacation to Hawaii; she wants to pick up a second job because she thinks that a second income will allow her to save up money for the vacation of her dreams.

Jimmy got caught fighting in school; so now he has detention for a week.

Our family's recipe for macaroni and cheese include the following ingredients; noodles, peppers, onions, and four different cheeses.

When I go to the zoo, I always visit my favorite animal first; the zebra.

Now that thirty students enrolled in my class; my professor does not give me any special attention.

Application: Record examples of semicolon abuse from your own writing, or create your own examples of semicolon abuse. Correct and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

11. Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement occurs when a verb form agrees with its subject in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second, and or third). Sometimes subjects and verbs do not agree when they do not stand next to each other in a sentence. Use the following steps to find and correct subjects and verbs that do not agree:

- ✓ Underline the subjects in a sentence
- ✓ Circle the verbs
- ✓ Read just the subject and the verb together aloud. If they do not “sound right” together, they probably do not agree. Are they in the same form? Are they in the same in number and in person?
- ✓ If not, change the verb form so that it is the same as the subject.

Example Sentence: Each of the bunnies live in our neighborhood.

- ✓ Underline the subject Each of the bunnies live in our neighborhood.
- ✓ Circle the verb: Each of the bunnies **live** in our neighborhood.
- ✓ Read the subject and verb together aloud: Each live
Each—singular form
Live—plural form
- ✓ Adjust the verb: Each of the bunnies **lives** in our neighborhood.

Revised Sentence: Each of the bunnies lives in our neighborhood.

Exercises: Correct subject-verb agreement in the following sentences.

The abundance of gardens in the neighborhood have drawn bunnies to the area.

Mrs. Smith’s prize-winning pumpkin and her rare mammoth zucchini was eaten by a were-rabbit.

Everyone think the bunnies are cute, but some gardeners consider them a nuisance.

A committee have formed to deal with our neighborhood’s bunny problem.

Application: Record examples of subject-verb disagreement in your writing into the space below, or write your own examples of sentences with subject-verb disagreement. Correct and rewrite the sentences.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.