

Fix It! Grammar

Robin Hood

STUDENT BOOK 2

Pamela White

THIRD EDITION

Also by Pamela White

Fix It! Grammar: The Nose Tree Teacher's Manual Book 1
Fix It! Grammar: The Nose Tree Student Book 1
Fix It! Grammar: Robin Hood Teacher's Manual Book 2
Fix It! Grammar: Frog Prince, or Just Deserts Teacher's Manual Book 3
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Fix It! Grammar
Robin Hood Student Book 2

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Instructions

Welcome to *Fix It! Grammar*. This year you can enjoy learning grammar by seeing how it works in a real-life story.

GET READY

To organize your work, you will need a two-pocket notebook with three-hole fasteners and a single-subject spiral notebook. If you have the spiral-bound *Fix It!* student book, then all you need is a single subject spiral notebook.

Use the center of the two-pocket notebook to collect the lesson and *Fix It!* pages as your teacher distributes them each week. Rewrite the passage in the front of the spiral notebook and use the back of the book to write down the vocabulary words and their definitions, working from the back forward.

Grammar cards are located in the back of the student book after page 72 and before the Grammar Glossary section. These may be cut out as they are needed and stored in a resealable plastic pouch or taped to a piece of card stock, as illustrated at right. The cards may be kept in the notebook pocket or tucked into the spiral-bound student book.



LEARN IT

With your teacher, read through the “Learn It” section for the week. This will show you what you will be looking for that week and for weeks to come.

To help you remember and review what you learned, use the grammar card(s) for the week. Keep them handy each time you work on *Fix It!* so that the information is at your fingertips.

FIX IT

- Every Day** Read the sentence. Look up the bolded word in a dictionary. Decide which definition best fits the meaning of the word in this sentence. In the vocabulary section of your notebook, write a brief definition (using key words) labeled with the appropriate week. Add to this list every day.
- Day 1** Read the instructions for the week with your teacher. Mark and fix the first passage with your teacher’s help. Discuss what you missed with your teacher, and then complete the rewrite after fixing.
- Days 2–4** Use the abbreviations at the top of the page along with the grammar cards to help you remember how to mark the passage. Your teacher will help you with anything you miss. Remember, a mistake is an opportunity to learn.
- Rewrite** After marking, correcting, and discussing the passage with your teacher each day, copy the corrected passage into your notebook so that you end up with a handwritten copy of the complete story. Your teacher can show you an example of the rewrite in the teacher’s book.
- Be sure to double-space.
 - Do not copy the markings, just the story.
 - Be careful to indent where indicated and use capital letters properly.
 - Carefully copy the punctuation and use end marks.

Indentation, Capitalization, Articles and Nouns, Who-Which Clauses, and End Marks

Be sure to cut out the Week 1 grammar cards located at the back of this book before the Grammar Glossary. Keep them handy so you can reference them as needed. The first card provides the reminders listed on page three of this book.

LEARN IT

Since this is the first day, there are several things you need to know to get started. But do not worry; they are easy! Read through these few things with your teacher, who will use the Day 1 passage to show you how they work.

- Indent** In fiction (stories), you should start a new paragraph for these four reasons: new speaker, topic, place, or time. To remember to indent in your rewrite, add the ¶ symbol or an arrow (→) in front of the sentence that needs an indent.
- In stories, the indentation rules are somewhat flexible, so your choice to indent may be different from what is recommended in the teacher book. That is fine! As long as you can explain why your choice fulfills a rule for indentation, you are good to go.
- Capitalization** You will not see any capital letters in your student book sentences. Show where capitals are needed by drawing three short lines directly underneath letters that should be capitalized. In your copy work, be sure to use capital letters where needed instead of those three lines. Rules to remember:
- Always capitalize the first word of a sentence, even a quoted sentence that falls in the middle of a longer sentence.
 - Always capitalize proper nouns, which are nouns that name specific persons, places, or things.
 - Do not capitalize titles when used alone (like “the king”) but do capitalize them when used with a name (King Arthur).
- Articles (ar)** Use the grammar cards to review the term *article*. There are only three articles: *a*, *an*, and *the*. Mark them by printing *ar* over each one. Articles are useful because they signal that a noun is coming.
- Noun (n)** Use the grammar cards to review the term *noun*. Nouns are things, people, animals, places, and ideas. To determine if a word is a noun, apply the noun test. Print an *n* above each noun in the passage.
- Who-Which (w-w)** If you have been doing Excellence in Writing, you have likely heard the term *dress-ups*. Dress-ups are ways of dressing up style in writing by using stronger vocabulary or more complex sentence structure. On Day 4 keep an eye out for the *who-which* clause. Mark it by writing *w-w* above the *who* or *which*.
- End Marks** Remember that every sentence must have an end mark. They are missing in this week's sentences. Decide which kind of end mark (period, question mark, or exclamation mark) each sentence needs and add it on.

vocabulary ¶ (indent) capitals	end marks (. ? !)	ar (articles: <i>a, an, the</i>) n (nouns) w-w (who-which)
--------------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------

DAY 1

in the olden days of england, king henry the second **reigned** over the land

DAY 2

there lived within the green **glades** of sherwood forest a famous outlaw whose name was

robin hood

DAY 3

no archer that ever lived could shoot a bow and arrow with such **expertise** as he did

DAY 4

he was not alone, either, for at his side were blameless, loyal men, who **rambled** with him

through the greenwood shades

Pronouns, Verbs, Coordinating Conjunctions, Its/It's, Comma with Items in a Series

Use the Week 2 grammar cards located in the back of this book to discuss the following concepts. Keep them handy so you can reference them as needed.

LEARN IT

Pronouns (*pr*) Pronouns refer back to some person or thing previously mentioned. A handy list is printed on the Pronouns grammar card. When you see these listed pronouns in the passages, label them with a *pr*.

Verbs (*vb*) Review the verb test on the Verbs grammar card. Read through the list of helping verbs on the back of the card. Helping verbs are always followed by an action verb, which they are helping out. The helping verb is like a boy scout who holds the arm of an elderly lady to help her cross the street. One always helps the other along.

Mark all the verbs in this week's fixes with a *vb*.

Coordinating Conjunctions (*cc*) Coordinating conjunctions are used to connect together two or more of the same types of words, phrases, or clauses. As you find them in these fixes, learn to identify what words the coordinating conjunction is joining.

Using the acronym FANBOYS, review the list of coordinating conjunctions on the grammar card. Label coordinating conjunctions by printing *cc* over each one.

Its versus It's Some words, like *it's* and *its*, are easily confused. To help you remember the difference between the possessive *its*, which does not have an apostrophe, and the contraction *it's*, which has an apostrophe and means *it is*, think of the apostrophe as a small *i*.

it's

When you see **its/it's** in this week's fixes, circle the correct usage on the student pages and copy the correct version in your copy work.

Commas with Items in a Series There are many rules for when to use commas; this week you will learn one of them. Items in a series are two or more words or groups of words joined with a *cc*, usually *and*.

a and b
a, b, and c

Three or more items in a series take commas. For example, you might be asked to go to the store to buy milk, eggs, and bread. Notice that there are commas after *milk* and *eggs*. Although the comma before the coordinating conjunction *and* is sometimes optional, it is usually needed to avoid confusion. Thus, it is easiest just to include it always.

vocabulary ¶ (indent) capitals usage (its/it's)	commas (,) end marks (. ? !)	<i>ar n w-w</i> <i>pr</i> (pronouns) <i>vb</i> (verbs) <i>cc</i> (coordinating conjunctions)
----------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

DAY 1

you might be wondering how robin hood fell under the **wrath** of the law

DAY 2

TIP: Three or more items in a series need commas between them. Find that situation in the passage below and add commas where appropriate.

when robin was eighteen—mature strong and **dauntless**—the sheriff of nottingham

challenged young men in the area to a shooting match

DAY 3

TIP: The passage below has another series of the same part of speech. Add commas where appropriate.

robin **readily** accepted the match grabbed his bow and arrow and started off from locksley,

which was the town where he lived

DAY 4

it was a pleasant, **carefree** day, but circumstances would soon change its/it's mood

Quotations, Homophones, Strong Verbs

Use the Week 3 grammar cards located in the back of this book to discuss the following concepts. Keep them handy so you can reference them as needed.

LEARN IT

Quotations	<p>Spoken words should be enclosed with quotation marks. These are the rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enclose what someone says in quotation marks but not narration that sets up a quotation.▪ When the speaker continues with more than one sentence, do not add close quotes until the end of his speech. Sometimes a speech will cover more than one day's assignment.▪ Commas and periods go inside closing quotation marks.▪ If narration interrupts a speech, use commas on both sides of the interruption. Commas “hug” the word they follow—that is, they come right next to it—not the word after them. <p>You will need to add quotation marks on Day 4 before and after the spoken words. Place the closing end mark inside the quotation marks.</p>
Homophones and Usage	<p>When sentences offer a choice of words, circle the correct one and then write it in your copy work. Homophones are words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Usage errors occur when one word is written but a different word is intended, like <i>its</i> and <i>it's</i>.</p> <p>This week you have two sets of homophones: <i>there/their/they're</i> and <i>to/two/too</i>. Use the grammar cards to help you remember which is which.</p>
Who-Which	<p>If you have been doing Excellence in Writing, you have likely heard the term dress-ups. Dress-ups are ways of dressing up style in writing by using stronger vocabulary or more complex sentence structures. Keep an eye out for <i>who-which</i> clauses, which make sentences more complex. Mark them by writing <i>w-w</i> above the <i>who</i> or <i>which</i>.</p>
Strong Verb	<p>Another dress-up is the strong verb. On Day 4 select the strongest verb from the week's passages. Of the verbs used this week, which one is more colorful, provides a stronger image or feeling, or is more specific?</p>

vocabulary ¶ (indent) capitals homophones and usage	commas (,) end marks (. ? !) quotation marks (“ ”)	<i>ar n w-w pr vb cc</i>
-----------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------

DAY 1

robin **blithely** whistled as he strolled along, thinking of maid marian and her bright eyes,

to/two/too

DAY 2

at such times, a young lad's heart **fancifully** turns toward the lass whom he loves the best

DAY 3

he came suddenly upon fifteen foresters clothed in lincoln green and seated beneath a huge
oak tree, feasting and drinking **convivially** beneath its/it's branches

DAY 4

one of the men in green **accosted** robin. you there/their/they're, where are you going with
your quick step **shoddy** bow and cheap arrows

Choose the action verb from this week's sentences that you think is strongest. Which dresses up the sentences best?

Fix It

- Read the sentence.
- Look up the bolded word in a dictionary and add the key word definition to your notebook.
- On Day 1, read the instructions. Then mark and fix the first passage with your teacher. After fixing, complete the rewrite. (See the back side of this card for rewrite instructions.)
- On Days 2–4: Use the abbreviations at the top of the student page and the grammar cards to help you remember how to mark and correct the passage. Your teacher will help you with anything you miss. Remember, a mistake is an opportunity to learn.

Capitals

The squire called, “Make way for King Arthur, the king.”

Indent

- ¶ New speaker
- ¶¶ New topic
- ¶¶ New place
- ¶ New time

Articles

a / an / the

Nouns

n

Who-Which Clause

W-W

Indent Rules

Week 1

To remember to indent, use a ¶.

In stories, we start a new paragraph for four reasons:

- new speaker
- new topic
- new place
- new time

Editing Marks

indent ¶
capitalize ≡
lowercase /
delete ℓ
insert ∨
space #
close up ()

Rewrite It

Copy the corrected passage into a separate notebook.

- Double-space and indent where indicated.
- Do not copy the markings, just the story.
- Remember to use capital letters properly.
- Carefully copy the fixed punctuation and grammar.

Articles (ar)

Week 1

Articles are easy because there are only three of them: *a*, *an*, *the*

Articles always set up a noun. When you see an article, a noun is sure to follow, although sometimes a describing word may come in between, as in “a small dwarf.”

Capital Letters

Week 1

- Use a capital letter for the first word of sentences, including the first word of quoted sentences.
- Use a capital letter for proper nouns such as names.
- Do not use capitals for titles like *king* and *princess* when they are not used with a name. E.g., *the king* versus *King Arthur*.

When a letter should be capitalized, draw three lines under the letter as an indicator.

Who-Which Clauses (w-w)

Week 1

A *who-which* clause usually describes the noun (the thing) that comes immediately before it.

Use “which” for things and “who” for people.

Nouns (n)

Week 1

Nouns are things, people, animals, places, and ideas.

To determine if a word is noun, apply these two tests, which work best for objects and animals:

- Is it countable? two _____
- Can an article come in front of it?
the _____; a/an _____

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 1

End Marks

? ! .

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 2

Pronouns

Pr

I, me, my, you, your,
he, him, his, she, her, it, its,
we, they, them, their

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 2

Verbs

vb

Verb test:

I will _____

Yesterday I _____

Book 2: Robin Hood

Weeks 2 and 15

Usage

possessive

no apostrophe

its

contraction

apostrophe

it's

whose

who's

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 2

Coordinating Conjunctions

cc

FANBOYS

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 2

Commas with Items in a Series

I need this, that,
and the other thing.

Pronouns (pr)

Week 2

Personal pronouns refer back to some person or thing recently mentioned and substitute for that person or thing.

Here is a list of pronouns to look for:

I, me, my, you, your, he, him, his, she, her, it, its, we, they, them, their

End Marks

Week 1

Use a period (.) for statements.

Use a question mark (?) for questions.

Use an exclamation mark (!) at the end of an exclamatory statement (Stop that man!) and some interjections (Hey!).

Coordinating Conjunctions (cc)

Week 2

Coordinating conjunctions connect together two or more of the same types of words, phrases, or clauses.

- She likes **cats** **or** **dogs**.
- He can leap *over the book* **and** *out the door*.
- *They eat mushrooms,* **but** *they don't eat cabbages.*

Verbs

Week 2

Action verbs express action (as in *chop, budge, confide*) or ownership (as in *have, possess, own*).

Helping verbs:

- *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been* (be verbs, which can also be linking verbs)
- *have, has, had*
- *do, does, did*
- *may, might, must, ought to*
- *would, will, could, can, should, shall*

Commas with Items in a Series

Week 2

Three or more items in a series take commas:

this, that, and the other thing

Put the comma before the cc.

Do not use a comma when the cc joins only two items:
this and that

Advanced: Can apply to phrases and other parts of speech:

quickly, fiercely, and angrily
singing, laughing, and giggling

Usage: its / it's and whose/who's

Weeks 2 and 15

Be careful with possessive pronouns and contractions!

Contractions: apostrophe

who's = *who is* To remember, think *who's*
it's = *it is* To remember, think *it's*

Possessive pronouns: no apostrophe

his, hers, its, whose

Book 2: Robin Hood

Weeks 3 and 5

Homophones and Usage

there / their / they're
your / you're
to / two / too

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 4

Commas with NDAs

Stand, Robin Hood!

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 4

Adjectives

adj

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 3

“Quotations”

The old woman asked, “Would you like an apple?”
The young lady replied, “They do look lovely. I would take one, but I was told not to accept gifts from strangers.”
“Why don’t you take one,” coaxed the old lady, “and see for yourself?”

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 4

Usage

then / than

Book 2: Robin Hood

Week 5

-ly Adverb

ly

Quotations “ ”

Week 3

When you copy quotations, pay attention to the punctuation and copy it exactly.

- Enclose what someone says in quotation marks but not narration that sets up a quotation.
- When the speaker continues with more than one sentence, do not add close quotes until the end of his speech. Sometimes a speech will cover more than one day's assignment.
- Commas and periods go inside closing quotation marks.
- If narration interrupts a speech, use commas on both sides of the interruption. Commas “hug” the word they follow—that is, they come right next to it—not the word after them.

Usage: then / than

Week 4

then = immediately afterward or next

than = a comparison term

Examples:

Then Robin Hood slipped into the forest.

The deer were more **than** sixty yards away.

Homophones and Usage

Weeks 3 and 5

there, their, they're

Use *there* to indicate a place (here or there).

Use *their* for ownership, something belonging to people.

Use *they're* for the contraction meaning *they are*.

your, you're

Use *your* for ownership, something belonging to you.

Use *you're* for the contraction meaning *you are*.

to, two, too

To is the preposition: to the right; to the store.

It is also the “to + verb” form of a verb: *to rush*; *to seize*.

Two = 2

Too = *also* or *too much*. It is easy to remember because it has one too many *o*'s!

-ly Adverbs (ly)

Week 5

Adverbs usually modify verbs or adjectives and answer the questions *how*, *when*, or *where*.

Many adverbs end in -ly.

When they do, they can count as the -ly adverb dress-up.

Adjectives (adj)

Week 4

Adjectives are descriptive words that describe (or modify) nouns and pronouns. Usually they come before the noun they modify (the *useful* pen), but they can come after a linking verb (it is *useful*).

To determine if a word is an adjective, apply this test:

The _____ pen

Fix It! Grammar

Glossary

Pamela White

THIRD EDITION

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Making grammar friendly

This glossary is available for reference if you wish to refresh your memory or would like more information about a specific rule.

One goal of the Institute for Excellence in Writing is to make grammar friendly for younger students and beginning writers. Thus, the terms used in the early *Fix It! Grammar* books are layman's terms, such as *-ing opener* instead of participle and *who-which* instead of adjective clause.

However, grammar terms are useful to the teacher and the student over time, so they are gradually incorporated into the books as well as defined in the glossary.

With the repetition provided in the Fix Its, your students will learn the elements and rules of grammar in manageable increments.

Editing Marks

indent	¶
capitalize	≡
lowercase	/
delete	ℓ
insert	✓
space	#
close up	⌒

Parts of Speech

Many words can be used as different parts of speech. You have to look at how they are used in the sentence to determine their parts of speech. To see how these parts of speech are used as IEW dress-ups and sentence openers, see the Stylistic Techniques section beginning on page G-35.

Articles (ar)

Articles are the words *a*, *an*, *the*.

Articles always set up a noun, so when students see an article, they should know that a noun will follow soon after. Sometimes adjectives come between the article and its noun: *a tall stranger*; *the reluctant, timid soldier*.

Nouns (n)

Nouns are objects (things), people, animals, places, and ideas.

To determine if a word is a noun, apply these two tests, which work best for objects and animals:

1. Is it countable? *two* _____
2. Can an article come in front of it? *the* _____; *a/an* _____.

Common and Proper Nouns

Common nouns name general things and are not capitalized.

Proper nouns are capitalized and name specific people, places, animals, and sometimes objects with a name unique to that specific person, place, or animal. *The king* is a common noun, but *King James* is proper. A *beagle* is a common noun, but the name of my pet beagle *Benji* is proper.

Compound Nouns

These are two or more words combined to form a single noun. They can be written as separate words (*apple tree*; *shooting match*), as hyphenated words (*lady-in-waiting*), or as one word (*marksman*; *wintertime*). To spell compound words correctly, consult a dictionary.

Students may be confused how to use something like *apple tree* in key word outlines or in marking nouns. A compound noun is not an adjective + noun or two nouns but just a single noun. These are nouns that could have been written as a single word because they express a single thing.

Noun Functions

The two functions of nouns and pronouns that are most useful to understand are the subject and the object of a preposition.

Subjects are nouns or pronouns that perform a verb action. Identify subjects by finding the verb first and then asking, “Who or what is doing this action?” That is the subject.

Saying that a noun is a subject identifies how it functions or behaves in that sentence; it is different from the part of speech (noun or pronoun).

Subject-verb agreement means that the subject and its verb should agree in number. If the subject is singular, the verb should be singular; if the subject is plural, the verb should be plural. Students occasionally find it confusing that a singular verb often ends in *s* and a plural verb does not: *she walks* but *they walk*.

The **object of a preposition** is the noun or pronoun that is the last word in a prepositional phrase. See under Parts of Speech: Prepositions, page G-11; and Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #2 Prepositional Opener, page G-39.

Other Noun Functions (Advanced)

Direct and **indirect objects** are important mainly as they relate to pronoun usage (*The soldier treated him graciously*, not *The soldier treated he graciously*). Since these are objects, they must use objective pronouns (see under Pronouns on the next page).

Direct objects follow a verb and answer the question *what* or *who*. Example: *The third soldier built a fire*. Built what? *a fire* (direct object).

Indirect objects are rarer and appear only when there is a direct object. They usually come between the verb and direct object and tell who or what received the direct object. Example: *The little man gave the second soldier a purse*. Gave what? *the purse* (direct object). Who received it? *the soldier* (indirect object).

The difficulty is that indirect objects also seem to answer the question *who* or *what* (gave who? *the soldier*). Tip: To tell the difference, you should be able to insert *to* in front of the indirect object: *gave a purse to the second soldier*. He is not giving the soldier to someone else.

Subject complements, a.k.a. predicate nouns, are important for the same pronoun usage problem (*It was she*, not *It was her*). These are nouns that follow a linking verb and point back to the subject, so they *complement* the subject.

Subject complements use subjective, not objective, pronouns (see under Pronouns on the next page), which is the only reason to teach these to older students. Note: Adjectives can also be subject complements.

Appositives are nouns that rename the noun that comes before them. They are important because they are punctuated with commas if nonessential (*Robin Hood, the archer*) and without commas if essential (*the archer Robin Hood*).

Imperative mood

is used to issue commands. The subject, *you*, is implied.

Example: *Tarry for me here*. Robin Hood is addressing his men, asking them to wait for him. *You* is the implied subject.

Pronouns (pr)

Personal pronouns refer back to a person or thing recently mentioned and substitute for that person or thing. They should agree in case, person, and number with the noun they refer to. Begin with having students identify basic pronouns and later work on pronoun agreement.

There are three cases:

Subjective case pronouns are used as the subject (or, infrequently, subject complements).

Objective case pronouns are used as objects of verbs or prepositions.

Possessive case pronouns show ownership. These do not have an apostrophe.

	Subjective pronouns	Objective pronouns	Possessive pronouns
1st person singular	I	me	my/mine
2nd person singular	you	you	your/yours
3rd person singular	he, she, it	him, her, it	his, her/hers, its
1st person plural	we	us	our/ours
2nd person plural	you	you	your/yours
3rd person plural	they	them	their/theirs
	who	whom	whose

Pronoun agreement: To agree in person means that first person pronouns should not shift suddenly to second or third. To agree in number means that a singular pronoun should refer back to a singular noun and a plural pronoun should refer to a plural noun.

There are several different categories of pronouns in addition to personal pronouns (relative, demonstrative, interrogative, indefinite, reflexive), but in practice, teach them only as they become relevant in writing.

Reflexive pronouns end in *self* or *selves* and refer back to a noun or pronoun in the same sentence.

Examples:

Princess Dorinda fancied *herself* quite chic.

The fish allowed *themselves* to be stroked.

Verbs (vb)

Verbs are words that express either action or a state of being. There are three types: action, linking, and helping verbs.

Action Verbs

Action verbs express action (as in *chop, budge, confide*) or ownership (as in *have, possess, own*).

Verb + Adverb (Advanced)

In identifying parts of speech, some students are confused by what look like prepositions after a verb but without the usual noun afterward. In this case, these words do not function as prepositions but as adverbs that must be coupled with that verb.

Examples: *Robin Hood set off; the Merry Men rose up; they cavorted about; stand back.*

Helping Verbs

Helping verbs appear with action verbs to help them along. Picture the helping verb as a Boy Scout who helps an elderly lady cross the street. One helps the other along!

Examples: *The magical purse would always refill with gold. Would helps refill. She had played him a trick. Had helps out played.*

Helping verbs:

am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been (be verbs, which can also be linking verbs)

have, has, had

do, does, did

may, might, must, ought to

would, will, could, can, should, shall

Tip: Helping verbs communicate possibility (*can, could, might, etc.*) or time (*was, did, has, etc.*).

Linking Verbs

Linking verbs connect the subject to a noun or adjective that renames or describes it and is called the **subject complement** (a.k.a. predicate noun and predicate adjective).

Examples: *Robin Hood was* (linking verb) *an outlaw* (subject complement). *The combatants seemed* (linking verb) *weary* (subject complement). *The princess was* (linking verb) *artful and cunning* (subject complements).

Common linking verbs:

am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been (be verbs, which can also be helping verbs)

seem, become (always linking verbs)

appear, grow, remain, continue

taste, sound, smell, feel, look (verbs dealing with the senses)

Some of these verbs can also be action verbs. Tip: If you can substitute *seem* for the verb, it is probably a linking verb.

Be Verbs

Be verbs often stump students when identifying parts of speech because they do not show action. Since they dominate our language and perform important functions as helping and linking verbs, it is important students can recognize that they are verbs.

Ask students to memorize the *be* verbs: *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been*.

Verbals: Infinitives, Participles, Gerunds (Advanced)

Verbals are words formed from a verb, but they usually do not function as a verb.

You do not have to teach students to identify whether a particular verbal is functioning as a noun or adjective or adverb. There is little point to drilling this harder concept except to mention that verbals are not verbs. Learning what function they take will not affect punctuation or help most students understand grammar, nor will it show up on the SAT or ACT.

As a strong verb dress-up? If students want to label a verbal as a strong verb, decide whether it is too advanced to direct them toward basic action verbs instead.

It helps older students to have a basic understanding of these verbals:

1. Infinitives are verbals formed by placing *to* in front of the simple present form of a verb (like *to sneeze*). Infinitives function as adjectives, adverbs, and nouns but never as verbs.

2. Participles often function as adjectives and come in two forms: present (-ing words) and past participles (-ed words). However, when participles are coupled with a subject and a helping verb, they function as verbs, as in *He **was splashing**, which frightened the fish. For years, she **had longed** to visit the world above the sea.*

a. Sometimes these participle-adjectives appear directly before the noun: *hunting skills; a botched case.*

b. Sometimes they are an -ing or -ed phrase coming before or after a main clause and modifying the subject of the main clause: *Springing to his feet, Robin Hood confronted the challenger.* (*Springing* describes *Robin Hood*, the subject after the comma.) See under Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #4 -ing Participial Phrase Opener, page G-41.

3. Gerunds are -ing words that function as nouns. Examples: *His splashing frightened the fish.* (*Splashing* is the subject of the sentence and therefore a noun.) *The fish were frightened by his splashing.* (*Splashing* is the object of the preposition *by* and therefore a noun.)

Split infinitives

A concern more of the past than the present, *split infinitives* are worth teaching advanced writers. To split one's infinitive is to insert one or more adverbs between "to" and the verb, as in "to foolishly insert."

Generally, split infinitives are acceptable but formerly frowned on, so avoid them when it is just as smooth to place the intervening adverb somewhere else.

Adjectives (adj)

Adjectives are words that describe or modify nouns and pronouns. Usually they come before the noun they modify, as in *the crowded room* or *covetous princess*.

Sometimes adjectives come after a linking verb, as in *the princess was **thrilled**; the soldiers were **penniless** and **forlorn***.

Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Comparative adjectives (ending in *-er*) and superlative adjectives (ending in *-est*) are forms of adjectives comparing two or more nouns. Students sometimes have trouble recognizing that words ending in *-er* or *-est* can be adjectives. Have them drop the ending and ask if the word remaining is an adjective.

Example: *The noblest buck is the most noble buck*. Drop the ending and ask if *noble* can describe a noun. It can, so *noble* and *noblest* are both adjectives.

Some words form irregular comparatives and superlatives. The most common of these are *good* and *bad*:

good, better, best

bad, worse, worst

Caution students against using *more* or *most* with a comparative or superlative adjective. Not *more prouder* but *prouder*. Most one-syllable adjectives form the comparative and superlative by adding the suffix. Adjectives of three or more syllables form the comparative with *more* and the superlative with *most* in front of the regular adjective. Two-syllable adjectives have more complex rules, but usually whichever sounds better is correct.

Adverbs (adv)

Adverbs usually modify verbs or adjectives and answer the questions *how*, *when*, or *where*. Encourage students to identify what part of speech the adverbs modify.

Example: *The princess stoutly denied that she possessed stolen goods*. *Stoutly* tells us how she denied, so it is the adverb, and it comes right before the verb it describes.

Many adverbs end in *-ly*. See Stylistic Techniques: Dress-Ups: *-ly* Adverb, page G-35; and Sentence Openers: #3 *-ly* Adverb Opener, page G-40.

Imposter -ly's: Some *-ly* words are adjectives like *chilly*, *ghastly*, *ugly*, and *friendly*. If the word describes an object or person (*the ugly duckling*), it is an adjective and not an adverb.

Advanced: Adverbs can also modify other adverbs, but this is rare and usually awkward in the hands of young writers, giving such unhelpful constructions as *she spoke extremely quickly*.

Advanced: Comparative adverbs are usually formed by adding *more* or *most* in front of the adverb. If the adverb is short, sometimes the suffix is used, as in *deadliest*. If in doubt, students should check a dictionary.

Tip: When adjectives come after a linking verb, they are known as **subject complements** or **predicate adjectives**. See Parts of Speech: Verbs: Linking Verbs, page G-8.

Prepositions (prep)

Prepositions start phrases that usually show some relationship dealing with space (*on the branch*) or time (*in the morning*). If it is something a frog can do with a log or a squirrel with a tree, it is probably a prepositional phrase: *climbs on the log*, *sits in the branches*, *runs around the tree*.

A prepositional phrase always follows this pattern:

preposition + noun (no verb)

It begins with a preposition, ends with a noun, and does not have a verb in it. Since there is not a subject + verb, it is a phrase, not a clause. There may be other words in between the preposition and noun, but there will never be a verb: *in the act*; *by a great baron*; *of strong and goodhearted yeomen*.

First learning parts of speech helps students accurately identify prepositional phrases. Until the concept is mastered, guide them to see that the phrase begins with a preposition, ends with a noun, and has no verb in it.

The most common prepositions:

aboard	at	despite	near	throughout
about	because of	down	of	to
above	before	during	off	toward
according to	behind	except	on, onto	under
across	below	for	opposite	underneath
after	beneath	from	out	unlike
against	beside	in	outside	until
along	besides	inside	over	unto
amid	between	instead of	past	up, upon
among	beyond	into	regarding	with
around	by	like	since	within
as	concerning	minus	through	without

In the first stories of *Fix It!* students are asked to identify prepositional phrases. Removing prepositional phrases helps students see the underlying structure of their sentences better, which is the basis for being able to punctuate correctly.

Doubling as other parts of speech: A few words in the preposition list are sometimes another part of speech, so guide students to determine this based on the pattern. The two most important examples:

1. Adverbs that follow a verb but do not start a prepositional phrase (*warded **off***; *cried **out***).
2. Subordinating conjunctions that start dependent clauses: *since*, *as*, *until*, *after*, *before*. See under Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42.

Younger students do not need to count the preposition *to* in an infinitive, as in *to float*, since infinitives work a little differently from prepositional phrases.

On not ending sentences with prepositions: This is a carryover from Latin and not a true rule in English. Andrew Pudewa quips that Winston Churchill gave the definitive answer to this problem when he remarked, “That is a rule up with which I will not put!”

If the sentence is more awkward to revise with the preposition placed earlier, it is better to have it at the end. Example: *I have only a plain blackthorn staff to meet you with.* The alternative is this stilted construction: *I have only a plain blackthorn staff with which to meet you.*

Misplaced prepositional phrases: The later stories deal with the problem of dangling prepositional phrases where misplaced prepositional phrases distort the meaning, often humorously.

Example: **King Arthur declared on special days** he would not feast until someone narrated a bizarre tale that he could trust. The king did not make this declaration on special days; instead, he declared he would not feast on them.

Revise by moving the prepositional phrase: *King Arthur declared **he would not feast on special days** until someone narrated a bizarre tale that he could trust.*

Coordinating Conjunctions (cc)

Coordinating conjunctions connect parts of speech, phrases, and clauses. Whatever they connect needs to be the same thing grammatically: two or more nouns, two or more present participles, two or more dependent clauses, two or more main clauses, and so forth.

Have students memorize the seven basic coordinating conjunctions using the mnemonic device FANBOYS, an acronym for the cc's: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.*

Punctuation: The main problem with cc's is that sometimes they have a comma in front of them and sometimes they do not. See Punctuation: Commas, page G-21.

The principles to keep in mind:

1. Use commas before cc's when they join

a. two main clauses. Pattern: **MC, cc MC**. Example: *Usually Robin towered over others, **but** the stranger was taller by a head and a neck.*

b. three or more items in a series. Pattern: **a, b, and c**. Example: *He ran to the window, opened it, **and** vaulted out.*

2. Do not use commas before cc's when they join two items in a series unless those are MCs. Example: *fine gardens **and** wide lawns.*

This applies to two verbs (a compound verb) with one subject. Pattern:

MC cc 2nd verb (notice there is no comma). Example: *He bowed **and** walked away.*

Train students to locate cc's and then determine what same parts of speech or constructions they are joining. This matters because it shows whether or not the commas will be necessary: comma if three or more; no comma if only two unless MCs. It also matters because it helps students identify faulty parallelism. See sidebar.

Starting sentences with cc's: Strict grammarians forbid this on the basis that the job of cc's is to connect things of equal grammatical rank. Generally, encourage this avoidance, especially in academic papers, but it is not a hard and fast rule.

One clear exception is in dialogue, which can mimic real speech patterns. We often start our thoughts with *and* or *but*.

Faulty parallelism

Coordinating conjunctions should join parts of speech, phrases, or clauses of equal grammatical rank. When they do not, it is known as faulty parallelism, a concept middle and high school students should learn. It means that the items in a series are not parallel, that is, not the same part of speech, type of phrase, or type of clause.

Example: Once she **stole** into the throne room, **swinging** on the chandeliers, and **landed** at the feet of the scandalized courtiers.

Problem: The sentence sets up a parallel construction but is not consistent with its items in a series (bolded).

Corrected: Once she **stole** into the throne room, **swung** on the chandeliers, and **landed** at the feet of the scandalized courtiers.

Subordinating Conjunctions

In IEW's stylistic techniques, we begin by teaching students the because clause, then seven more common clause starters using the acronym **www.asia.b** for the words that can start dependent clauses:

when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because

Later we add three more:

until, whereas, unless

These are all subordinating conjunctions, so named because they start subordinate clauses, an older term for dependent clauses. There is no special need to teach the terminology (subordinating conjunction) except that it is important to distinguish these types of words from coordinating conjunctions (cc). For simplicity's sake, students can mark these clause starters with a *cl*.

The main difference is that when coordinating conjunctions (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so*) are added to a main clause, we still have a main clause. When subordinating conjunctions (*when, while, where, etc.*) are added to a main clause, they turn it into a dependent clause. The punctuation changes too. See under Stylistic Techniques: Dress-ups: Clause Starters, page G-38; and Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42.

Advanced: Confusingly, *since, until, and as* sometimes function as prepositions, and *because of* is also a preposition. See tips for distinguishing them under Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42.

Advanced: Also confusingly, *as, where, when, while* and *whereas* sometimes start adjective clauses or function as coordinating conjunctions. See Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases: Clauses: Dependent Clauses (Advanced), page G-17; and Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42.

Conjunctive Adverbs (Advanced)

These words are a writer's plague—albeit an important group of words!—because they are often confused with subordinating conjunctions but need different punctuation.

Some common conjunctive adverbs: *however, therefore, then, moreover, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus, furthermore, instead, otherwise*.

Learn this principle: When you add a conjunctive adverb to a main clause, it is still a main clause, which is not the case with subordinating conjunctions.

How this matters:

1. If conjunctive adverbs start a sentence, usually follow them with a comma as you would any transitional word or expression. The exception is short conjunctive adverbs like *then*, which do not require a pause.

Examples: **Then** they dropped it when we were older. **Moreover**, didn't they realize cell phones were for emergencies only?

2. If a conjunctive adverb falls between two main clauses that belong together in one sentence, put a semicolon before it and comma after: **MC; ca, MC**.

Example: *Years of indulgence had spoiled her beyond recognition; however, Lady Constance recalled a time in Dorinda's childhood when she had been a lovable child.*

If the main clauses express two different ideas, separate them with a period.

Parts of Speech

*The lady bent down and awarded Gawain a kiss. **Then** she appealed to him to rhapsodize about the tribulations and treasures of true love.*

3. If conjunctive adverbs fall in the middle of a sentence, however, use two commas or none, depending on whether you need a clear pause around them.

*Examples: Chanticleer ignored her advice, **however**. Pertelote **therefore** argued more vehemently for laxatives from the garden. Chanticleer **then** countered with another round of dire dreams, which **nevertheless** failed to convince Pertelote.*

Interjections

Interjections are words that express a strong emotion, such as *ow*, *oh*, *ugh*, *whew*. They usually are set off with commas, but if they have a strong exclamatory message, you may put an exclamation mark after them. Alone, they do not count as a sentence.

“Oops! I do believe I’ve broken your leg.”

“Oh, yes, benevolent frog!”

“Yuck! I won’t touch another bite!”

Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases

Sentences

A sentence expresses one complete thought. To do so, it must have at least one main clause.

Sentence sense. Writers often string together more than one main clause in a sentence, often with the coordinating conjunction *and*, when those main clauses would be more powerful as separate sentences. When students are ready to understand the concept, discourage this practice.

Sentence fragments. A fragment is an error in which a sentence has phrases and/or dependent clauses but no main clause.

Servants came forth, attending to his horse. Welcoming the warrior. The second part is an unacceptable fragment.

In fiction and even in academic writing for some teachers, fragments that do not leave the reader hanging and that fit the flow of the paragraph are dramatic and effective. *Fix It!* stories permit such fragments, especially in dialogue when complete sentences would sound unnatural. The key is whether or not the fragment leaves the reader feeling as if something more is needed.

“Would you like me to rescue your ball?”

“Oh, yes!” (acceptable fragment)

Because students often use fragments ineffectively in formal writing, many teachers forbid the use of any fragment. Discuss which fragments in the *Fix It!* stories work well and which ones do not in order to arm students with the practice of recognizing sentence fragments. This will also help them distinguish phrases and dependent clauses from main, or independent, clauses.

Clauses and Phrases

Failure to recognize the basic clauses and phrases that form the underlying structure of sentences is at the heart of most students’ inability to punctuate their sentences properly.

When older students struggle with knowing where to place their commas, this, along with knowing basic parts of speech, is most likely the root problem. They cannot recognize a main clause if they do not know what a subject-verb pair is, and they cannot know this if they do not distinguish nouns, pronouns, and verbs from other parts of speech.

The different levels of *Fix It!* teach grammar progressively in this way: beginning with basic parts of speech, then identifying phrases and clauses, and gradually adding in punctuation. Once students understand the basic structure of their sentences, they will know how to apply the punctuation rules.

Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words that does not have both a subject and a verb.

Prepositional phrases. Practically speaking, these are the only phrases worth teaching. Finding prepositional phrases helps get the “noise” out of the sentence and makes it easier for students to see their clauses. It also helps them properly identify #2 sentence openers. See Parts of Speech: Prepositions, page G-11; and Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #2 Prepositional Opener, page G-39.

Appositive. A convenient word for a simple concept, an appositive is a noun that renames the noun that comes right before it. Example: *Robin Hood, the archer*. The only reason appositives are worth flagging is that they usually are set off with commas but sometimes not. See under Punctuation: Commas: Rule 15: Essential-Nonessential Elements, page G-24.

Clauses

A clause is a group of related words that must have both a subject and a verb.

Main Clauses (MC)

These are clauses that can stand alone as a sentence.

a. *Main clause* is abbreviated *MC* in *Fix It!* The MC is also known as an independent clause or strong clause.

b. MCs usually start with a subject or with an article (*a, an, the*) and/or adjectives plus subject. Example: *The poor soldiers returned* follows the pattern of “Article (*The*) adjective (*poor*) subject (*soldiers*) verb (*returned*).”

Sometimes the subject-verb will be inverted, with the verb coming before the subject. Examples: *There gathered around him displaced countrymen*. subject-verb = countrymen gathered. *Up rose his Merry Men*. subject-verb = Merry Men are. These are still MCs.

c. When identifying MCs, include prepositional phrases in the middle or at the end of the clause but not ones that come before MCs. Follow common sense in determining which words must group with the basic subject and verb of the main clause.

d. Sometimes dependent clauses (like *who-which*’s) are included in a MC and needed for it to make sense. Example: *I have never met a man who could topple me off a bridge*. The MC includes the dependent *who* clause and does not make sense as just *I have never met a man*.

Dependent Clauses (DC)

These are clauses that cannot stand alone as a sentence.

a. *Dependent clause* is abbreviated *DC* in *Fix It!* It is also known as a subordinate clause or weak clause.

b. DCs are basically main clauses with another word or words in front that turn the main clause into something that leaves us hanging, that cannot stand alone as a sentence.

For practical purposes, it is enough for younger students to recognize the dependent clause starters *who*, *which*, *that*, and the subordinating conjunctions, the *www.asia.bu* words *when*, *while*, *where*, *as*, *since*, *if*, *although*, *because*, *until*, *whereas*, *unless*.

As an example, start with a main clause: *The foresters discovered them in the act*. Now add a *www* word: *Although the foresters discovered them in the act*. There is still a subject and verb, so this is a clause and not a phrase. However, the second version leaves us hanging. Although this is true, something else must also be true.

DCs (Dependent Clauses) must be attached to a MC (Main Clause) to be a legal sentence.

c. To simplify grammar, focus on teaching just two types of DCs: 1. *who-which* clauses, and 2. *www.asia.b* clauses. In *Fix It!* adverb clauses that begin with one of the *www* words are abbreviated as *AC*.

See Stylistic Techniques: Dress-Ups: *Who-Which* Clause, page G-36, and Clause Starters (*www.asia.b*), page G-38; and Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42.

Tip: Conjunctive adverbs like *however*, *therefore*, *then* and coordinating conjunctions like *and*, *or*, *but* do not turn a MC into a DC.

Dependent Clauses (Advanced)

Understanding DCs well and punctuating them perfectly every time can get complex. The amount of time it would take to teach most students these finer points of grammar is not always worth it, but it may help teachers to understand the following.

Dependent clauses function in different ways, which can affect their punctuation.

1. Adverb clauses, a.k.a. adverbial clauses (AC)

Most of the time, a clause starter from the *www* word list will start an adverb clause. It should not be set off with a comma if it falls in the middle or at the end of a sentence (**MC AC**), but it takes a comma after the clause if it is an opener (**AC, MC**).

2. Adjective clauses

This usually starts with a relative pronoun, mainly *who*, *which*, or *that*. Adjective clauses usually follow nouns or pronouns and describe the nouns they follow: *the arrow that Robin shot...*; *the princess, who was artful and cunning...*

Adjective clauses are set off with commas if they are nonessential to the rest of the sentence but not set off with commas if they are essential. See under Punctuation: Commas: Rule 15: Essential-Nonessential Elements, page G-24.

Unfortunately—and this is one of the areas where grammar gets messy—three of the subordinating conjunctions that are in the clause starter list, *as*, *where*, and *when*, sometimes start adjective clauses and thus act as relative pronouns. This matters because adverb clauses in the middle or end of sentences never take commas, but adjective clauses take commas when they are nonessential.

Contrast these examples:

The roof is formed of shells, which open and close as the water flows over them.
As is a subordinating conjunction meaning *while*; it starts an adverb clause, so no comma.

The outcome of joy is invariably woe, as all creatures know. *As* is a relative pronoun meaning *a fact that*; it starts a nonessential clause and needs a comma.

Other messy exceptions are *while* and *whereas*, which can be subordinating conjunctions (no comma before them) or coordinating conjunctions (comma before them when they join main clauses).

Contrast these sentences:

*The second soldier took the road to the right **while** he thought about his next plan of action.* No comma because *while* is a subordinating conjunction starting an adverb clause, and adverb clause dress-ups are not set off with commas. *While* means “at the same time that” here.

*The second soldier took the path to the right, **while** the other two determined to travel down the road to the left.* Comma because *while* is a coordinating conjunction joining two main clauses (**MC, cc MC**). As a cc, *while* and *whereas* convey a contrast.

3. Noun clauses

These function as nouns. Most often, they follow a verb and begin with *that*, one of the words that confusingly can also begin an adjective clause. You can tell the difference because *that* adjective clauses follow a noun while *that* noun clauses follow a verb. Example: *People felt that Robin Hood was like them.* *That* follows the verb *felt* so starts a noun clause.

Tip: A clause is a noun clause if you can substitute a pronoun for it. Example: *People felt **that** Robin Hood was like them.* *People felt **it**.* Makes sense! But: *Robin returned to the town **that** he had left.* *Robin returned to the town **it**?* This does not make sense, so this *that* starts an adjective, not a noun, clause.

Where grammar gets even muddier is that *when*, *where*, *who* and other words sometimes start noun clauses. However, students will not run into these situations enough in marking dress-ups and openers to make it worth spending the time to teach noun clauses. Fortunately, students rarely have trouble punctuating noun clauses, so learning about them becomes a moot issue.

Punctuation

End Marks . ? !

A sentence may end with a **period**, **question mark**, or **exclamation mark**.

Do not double punctuate. Not “*You’re sure?!* ” or “*Hah!* ,” *he said*. But “*You’re sure?* ” and “*Hah!* ” *he said*.

Rule 1. Use periods at the end of statements and in abbreviations.

He bowed and walked away.

Advanced: Comma splices and **fused sentences** occur when students join main clauses with only commas or with no punctuation. MCs need something stronger to hold them together, often a period. See under Semicolons, page G-26.

Rule 2. Periods (and commas) go inside closing quotation marks.

“The better man should cross first.”

Rule 3. Use question marks after direct questions.

Did you ever hear the story of the three poor soldiers?

Rule 4. Use exclamation marks when the statement expresses strong emotion, but do not overuse them. When a character is said to exclaim something, the context begs for an exclamation mark.

“No one calls me a coward!”

“Hah!” the other exclaimed.

Quotations “ ”

Rule 1. Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations but not indirect speech, which usually begins with *that*. Quotation marks should “hug” the words they enclose—that is, there should not be a space between the quotation mark and the word or punctuation it encloses.

“It’s no wonder that child has turned out so blemished,” clucked Lady Constance.
(direct)

Secretly he thought that in beauty she surpassed Queen Guinevere herself. (indirect)

Rule 2. The attribution is the narrative that sets up a quotation with a speaking verb (*he said*). Set attributions off from quotations with commas. The attribution can come before, after, or in the middle of the quotation.

When using your computer, be sure you are creating *curly quotes* (“ ”) and not *straight quotes* (" ").

Straight quotes should be reserved for measurements, and only when the format is very tight, such as 6" 2' for six feet, two inches.

Punctuation

Patterns: **speaking verb, “quote” or “quote,” speaking verb**

He *answered*, “Hand me a stout bow and straight arrow.”

“I will join your band,” *announced* the stranger.

“You stand back,” *responded* his adversary, “since I am the better man.”

Rule 3. Commas and periods always go inside closing quotations (unless they are followed by parentheses, in which case they go after the parentheses).

“It’s gold, you know.”

Rule 4. Exclamation marks and question marks go inside closing quotations when they are part of the material quoted; otherwise, they go outside. Also, use only one ending mark of punctuation—the stronger—with quotation marks, em dashes excepted.

“If only I could have my ball back, I would bestow a handsome reward on my benefactor!”

“Dorinda, who was at the door?” King Morton inquired.

Rule 5. If a quotation ends in an exclamation mark or question but is followed by an attribution, use a lowercase letter at the beginning of the attribution (unless it starts with a proper noun) because the attribution is part of the same sentence as the quotation.

“Have at him!” cried Will Stutely.

Rule 6. When a spoken sentence is interrupted, close the first part and begin the second with quotation marks. Do not capitalize the first letter of the continuation.

“By the great yew bow of Saint Withold,” cried the stranger, “that is a shot indeed!”

Rule 7. When typing, place thoughts in italics instead of in quotation marks.

It’s time she was humbled a little, thought the wise soldier.

When handwriting, use quotation marks.

Rule 8. Use italics or place quotation marks around words referred to as words. Trick: Insert “the word(s)” or “the name” before the word in question to tell if this rule applies.

Since “Little” is indeed your true name.... (Since the name “Little”...)

He would have none of this recent drivel of dropping “sir” and “madam” when addressing one’s elders. (dropping the words “sir” and “madam”)

Rule 9. Use single quotation marks for quotations within quotations. This is the only time to use single quotations.

“She also insisted on stripping the top coverlets from all the mattresses because, as she put it, ‘They might be unclean.’”

Rule 10. In conversation, if someone is speaking and changes topic, start a new paragraph. However, close his first paragraph without a quotation mark and open his new paragraph with a quotation mark.

The missing quotation mark at the end of the first paragraph signals that he has not finished speaking. The opening quotation mark in the next paragraph reminds us that someone is still speaking.

Robin accepted the challenge. “I will stoop to you as I never stooped to man before.

¶ “Friend Stutely, cut down a white piece of bark four fingers tall and wide.”

Apostrophes ’

Rule 1. Use an apostrophe with contractions, placing it where the letter(s) have been removed. Note that in formal writing contractions should be avoided, but they are acceptable in fiction, especially in dialogue.

“I’ll figure out how to trick them.”

“It’s too bad, but we’d better go our separate ways.”

Rule 2. Use an apostrophe to show possession. To form plural possessives, make the noun plural first; then add an apostrophe. An exception is irregular plural possessives like *children’s* and *women’s*.

the second soldier’s turn

the soldiers’ last night at the palace (the last night of all three soldiers)

Rule 3. Never use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns (*his, hers, its, theirs, ours, yours*) since they already show possession. Teach students the differences in these tricky pairs:

Possessive Pronoun	Contraction
its	it’s (it is; remember by it’s)
whose	who’s (who is)
theirs	there’s (there is)

Just like with quotation marks, when using your computer, be sure you are using *curly apostrophes* (’) and not *straight apostrophes* (').

Commas ,

Rule 1. Adjectives before a noun

Use commas to separate two or more coordinate adjectives before a noun. **Coordinate adjectives** each independently describe the noun, as in *dewy, silent leaves*.

Do not use commas to separate **cumulative adjectives**, in which the first adjective modifies both the second adjective and the noun, as in *one fair morning*. The adjectives are cumulative if the last one deals with time, age, or color or if it forms a compound noun with the noun (*apple tree*).

Two tricks help distinguish coordinate from cumulative, but these are just tricks that depend on a quick response, not rules. If you think about it too long, it is harder to tell.

Adjectives are coordinate and need a comma if you can

1. reverse their order.
2. add *and* between them.

Examples: With *pointed, protruding nose*, it sounds right to say both *protruding, pointed nose* and *pointed and protruding nose*, so the adjectives are coordinate and the comma is necessary.

With *stout oak staff*, it sounds awkward to say either *oak stout staff* or *stout and oak staff*, so the adjectives are cumulative and should not have a comma.

Occasionally students will put a comma between an adjective and the noun it modifies, as in *the pointed, protruding, nose*. Be on the lookout for this and squash this habit if it forms!

Rule 2. Quotations

Use a comma with a verb of speaking that introduces a direct quotation, whether the verb comes before or after the quotation.

Older students who do not correctly punctuate their sentences rarely learn by memorizing punctuation rules. The problem goes back to understanding the underlying sentence structure. See under Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases: Clauses and Phrases, page G-15.

Students with weak understanding of when to punctuate should start with the first story of *Fix It!*

“King Mel loathes courtly balls,” Lord Ashton *protested*.

Lord Ashton *protested*, “King Mel loathes courtly balls.”

Rule 3. Nouns of Direct Address (NDAs)

Set off nouns of direct address (NDAs) with commas.

“*Fool*, you have killed the king’s deer.”

“For fourteen days we have enjoyed no sport, *my friends*.”

Rule 4. Items in a series

Pattern: a, b, and c. Use commas to separate three or more items in a series. These items must be the same part of speech or same grammatical construction, such as phrases or clauses. The last two items are usually connected by a coordinating conjunction.

Robin was *mature*, *strong*, and *dauntless*. (three adjectives)

He *accepted* the match, *grabbed* his bow and arrow, and *started* off from Locksley.
(three verbs)

The Oxford comma. Current trend is to keep the Oxford comma, which is the comma before the coordinating conjunction in three or more items in a series. Although the Oxford comma is optional if there is no danger of misreading, writers do not always recognize potential confusion. It is never wrong to include the Oxford comma, so it is easier to include it always.

Example: *To his hens, Chanticleer gave fine gifts, the pleasure of his singing and corn.*

Ambiguity: Are “the pleasure of his singing and corn” the actual gifts, or are these three separate items? The Oxford comma clarifies that these are three separate items: *Chanticleer gave fine gifts, the pleasure of his singing, and corn.*

Pattern: a and b. Do not use commas with only two items in a series unless those items are main clauses.

You shall enjoy succulent *venison* and the stoutest tasting *ale*. (two nouns)

He will receive a *trouncing* and a *ducking* himself. (two -ing words)

Rule 5. Compound verb. Pattern: MC cc 2nd verb.

Do not use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that joins two verbs (a compound verb) with the same subject. It helps to think of this as joining only two items (two verbs) in a series. You will not see a second subject after the coordinating conjunction.

They *built* great fires and *roasted* the does. (two verbs)

He also *had* the little man in the red jacket for his guest and *treated* him graciously.

Rule 6. Main clauses with a coordinating conjunction. Pattern: MC, cc MC

Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that joins two main clauses. You will see a subject and verb after the coordinating conjunction.

“*He is* of diminished princely stature, *and he doesn’t care* for polo.”

They had fought well in the wars, *but now they were* out of work and destitute.

Rule 7. Introductory prepositional phrases (#2 sentence openers)

Use commas after introductory prepositional phrases of five or more words. The comma is optional with fewer than five words. With short prepositional openers, let the pause test be your guide: If it sounds better with a pause, include a comma; if it does not need a pause, leave it out.

For advanced writers, emphasize that this is the only situation when quotations are set up with a comma. In research, quotations are often worked into the text with no punctuation or with a colon when they follow a main clause that they also illustrate.

Technically, the comma in the MC, cc MC pattern is optional when the clauses are short and there is no danger of misreading.

However, since it can cause confusion to omit it, it is easier to include it always.

On his journey north Gawain encountered few obstacles. (comma optional)

From stone to stone they cavorted about. (comma optional)

“*By the faith of my heart*, never have I been called a craven in all my life!”

With a string of opening introductory prepositional phrases, save the comma for the end of all of them, even if one of them is long.

Not: During the long and arduous weeks, of preparation, for the ball, Mel was shuffled off to the hunting lodge.

But: During the long and arduous weeks of preparation for the ball, Mel was shuffled off to the hunting lodge.

Advanced: When the introductory prepositional phrase is followed by a verb instead of noun or pronoun, do not add the comma.

Behind them close on their heels *bounded* the cow and the calf.

Rule 8. Mid-sentence prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases in the middle of sentences are not set off with commas.

The stranger shot *at the small white square* fixed to its front.

Rule 9. Transitional expressions and interjections

Use a comma after introductory transitional expressions and interjections. Usually include commas on both sides of interrupting words or phrases that appear elsewhere in a sentence.

Meanwhile, Robin’s men lay off to the side of the prodigious oak.

Moreover, didn’t they realize cell phones were intended for emergencies only?

The palace accountant ordered them a new HDTV, complete with a surround system, *too*.

As grown-up girls, *however*, they could go when they pleased.

When an interjection expresses a strong emotion, use an exclamation mark instead.

Alas! In an ox’s stall this night I shall be murdered where I lie.

Rule 10. Introductory adverb clauses (#5 sentence openers). Pattern: AC, MC

Use commas after introductory #5 adverb clause sentence openers, even if they are short. An adverb clause is a type of dependent clause. See Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42.

Although the foresters discovered them in the act, they narrowly escaped.

Since the problem was obvious, he continued after a pause.

When he finished, they thanked their old friend heartily for his kindness.

Because the Sheriff of Nottingham was related to the slain forester, he had a vendetta to catch Robin Hood.

Rule 11. Adverb clause dress-up. Pattern: MC AC

Do not use a comma with mid-sentence adverb clauses. See Stylistic Techniques: Dress-Ups: www.asia.b words, page G-38. See exceptions in Rules 13 and 15 below.

Robin observed him *as* he trimmed his staff.

“Remain on the other side *while* I quickly make a staff.”

“I will tan your hide *until* it’s as many colors as a beggar’s cloak *if* you touch your bow.”

Rule 12. Comparisons.

Do not use a comma to separate parts of a comparison.

O disconsolate hens, louder was your keening *than* that of senators’ wives in Rome.

Rule 13. Contrasting elements.

Use commas to separate contrasting parts of a sentence.

The ideas in this story are the cock’s thoughts, not mine.

This is especially confusing with the *www* words *although*, *while*, and *whereas*. When they contrast the main clause before them, set them off with a comma, despite the more common rule **MC AC**.

“Now you flinch for fear, *although* you have felt no harm.”

“Whatever I win in the woods I will award you in the evening, *while* all that you have gained you must bestow on me.”

This sometimes applies to the *cc* *but* when it presents a strong contrast, even when it is joining only two items in a series that are not main clauses and therefore normally do not take a comma.

“Dreams are often a portent not just of joy, *but* of tribulations to come.”

Rule 14. Participial Phrases (#4 sentence openers)

Use commas after introductory -ing participial phrases, even if they are short.

Excusing herself from the table, Dorinda hastened away.

Participial phrases in the middle or at the end of sentences are usually nonessential and therefore set off with commas.

Her sisters rose from the depths, *singing plaintively*.

Rule 15. Essential-Nonessential elements (a.k.a. restrictive-nonrestrictive)

Set off *who-which* clauses, appositives, participial phrases, and adjective clauses with commas if they are nonessential. Do not put commas around them if they are essential.

If the clause or phrase is necessary to the meaning of the rest of the sentence or if it specifies which one of something is being discussed, it is essential and should not be enclosed in commas.

If it does not alter the meaning of the rest of the sentence or if the person or thing is adequately identified, it is nonessential and needs commas, even though it may be adding important information. *Nonessential* should not be taken to mean unimportant.

Tricks to test:

1. Mentally remove the clause or phrase from the sentence to see if it alters the information in the rest of the sentence or specifies who or what is meant. If it does not, the element is nonessential and should be set off with commas.
2. Put parentheses around the clause or phrase. If the sentence still seems to work, the clause or phrase is probably nonessential.

Importantly, often whether or not you use commas changes the meaning. For example, it is correct to punctuate the following *who* clause as essential or nonessential: *Even the footmen, who once toadied to her, snubbed her*. With commas, it is saying that all footmen

Tip: Sometimes it is not crystal clear whether a clause or phrase is essential or nonessential. Ask these questions:

Does it affect the meaning of the rest of the sentence?

Does it specify which particular noun is intended?

Then use your best guess. Grammarians will not always agree on particular examples!

Tip: The concept of essential and nonessential elements does not apply to sentence openers, which have separate rules of punctuation. Test this out only on phrases and clauses in the middle or at the end of sentences.

snubbed her, and, incidentally, all once toadied to her. Without commas it is saying that only those footmen who used to toady to her now snubbed her: *Even the footmen who once toadied to her snubbed her.*

Examples:

“Be ready to heed my call, *which will sound as three short blasts upon the bugle horn.*”
(nonessential which clause)

If we remove the which clause from the sentence, the main clause meaning does not change: the speaker still wants them to be ready to heed his call. The which clause is therefore nonessential, even though it adds important information, and should be set off with commas.

He had shot a deer *that the king reserved for his own table.* (essential that clause, so no comma)

This clause is essential because it specifies which particular deer. He did not shoot just any deer but one reserved for the king.

“It was agreed that the poor soldier *who had already suffered from the power of the apple* should undertake the task.” (essential who clause)

The who clause specifies which soldier—the one who had already suffered from the apple’s power—so is needed in the sentence and therefore not set off with commas. It restricts the information to that particular soldier, which is why these are sometimes called restrictive clauses.

She had confessed the truth to Lady Constance, *who now played her trump card.*
(nonessential who clause)

Lady Constance is already sufficiently identified. The who clause adds an important detail but does not alter the meaning of the rest of the sentence so is nonessential and needs a comma.

the archer *Robin Hood* (essential appositive)

Without his name, we would not know which archer is intended, so this is an essential appositive and should not be set off with a comma.

Robin Hood, *the archer* (nonessential appositive)

It adds information but does not restrict the information to a particular Robin Hood or change the meaning of the rest of the sentence.

Robin Hood rose, *needing a change.* (nonessential participial phrase)

He still rose, regardless of whether or not he needed a change. The participial phrase adds information but does not alter the meaning of the main clause.

Advanced: Sometimes *when*, *as*, and *where* start adjective clauses instead of adverb clauses. When they do, they can be essential or nonessential. This next example illustrates a nonessential adjective clause (*where*) and a nonessential participial phrase (*frightened*).

Robin waded to the bank, *where* the little fish scattered and fled, *frightened* at his splashing.

Tip: The word *that* can replace *which* in essential clauses.

Tip: Most participial phrases are nonessential.

Semicolons ;

Rule 1. Use semicolons to join main clauses when they are so intricately linked they belong in the same sentence. Otherwise, use a period. Pattern: **MC; MC**

“He sounds like just my type; he sounds just like me!”

Advanced: Conjunctive adverbs (words like *therefore, however, nevertheless, moreover, furthermore*) do not turn a main clause into a dependent one; therefore, use a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb if it joins two main clauses that belong in one sentence. Use a period if the main clauses should be two sentences.

Run-ons. A **comma splice** is the error caused by joining two main clauses with only a comma when they need to be joined with something stronger, such as a semicolon, a period, or a comma plus a coordinating conjunction. A **fused sentence** is the error of joining two main clauses with no punctuation or coordinating conjunction.

Comma splice: *Gawain glanced up, the great ax descended.* Something stronger than a comma is needed to join these two main clauses.

There are four common solutions to run-ons, which work better or worse depending on the sentence:

1. Period: Gawain glanced up. The great ax descended.

2. Semicolon: Gawain glanced up; the great ax descended.

- a. Use a semicolon only when the two clauses are so inextricably linked (and often parallel in construction) that they are expressing one idea and need to go together in one sentence.
- b. A semicolon is more effective than a period here because it shows there is a link between these two ideas, but solutions 3 and 4 are better still.

3. Comma + cc: Gawain glanced up, *and* the great ax descended.

4. Adverb clause: Subordinate one of the clauses by starting it with one of the *www.asia.b* words:

- a. As Gawain glanced up, the great ax descended. (Comma needed after the introductory adverb clause: **AC, MC.**)
- b. Gawain glanced up as the great ax descended. (No comma needed with adverb clause dress-up: **MC AC.**)

This is the best solution to this comma splice because the subordinating conjunction *as* explains how the two clauses are related: Gawain happened to glance up at the same time that the Green Knight lowered his ax.

A period is usually the easiest and often the best solution for run-ons, especially for younger students.

Advanced: Rule 2. Use semicolons to separate items in a series when the items contain internal commas. (Rare)

Highborn women lamented when Troy, that noble city celebrated by Homer, fell through trickery; when Pyrrhus, ancient Greek ruler, seized King Priam by the beard; and when the Romans, ruthless and crazed, torched Carthage to the ground.

Colons :

Rule 1. Use a colon after a main clause to introduce an explanation or a list when a phrase like *for example* or *that is* is not included. Lists take no punctuation if there is not a main clause setting them up.

“Yet one other boon I ask: please accept this simple souvenir from me.”

Advanced: High school students will benefit from this pattern when they make a point and want to use a quotation to support that point. The colon is the perfect mark of punctuation to join the main clause to the quotation that illustrates it. Think of colons as meaning *see what follows* or *an example follows*.

Rule 2. In business or technical writing, use colons after subheads or words like *example* to set up what follows. Rarely use this in academic papers.

To:	Example:
Fix:	Dear Sir or Madam:

Rule 3. Use a colon to separate the hour and minutes when specifying time of day.

“We have a manicure scheduled for 10:15.”

Hyphens -

Rule 1. Use hyphens in some compound nouns, such as *lady-in-waiting*. Consult a dictionary to check whether the compound noun should be written as one word (*marksman*), two words (*apple tree*), or hyphenated words.

Rule 2. Use hyphens with compound adjectives in front of a noun but usually not after a noun: jewel-encrusted crown, nineteenth-century author, well-attired people. Her crown was jewel encrusted. He lived in the nineteenth century. The people were well attired.

Rule 3. Use hyphens with compound numbers from *twenty-one* to *ninety-nine* and with spelled out fractions like *one-fourth*.

Rule 4. Use hyphens in phone numbers: 555-1212.

Em Dashes and Parentheses — ()

Although em dashes and parentheses should be used sparingly, especially in academic writing, they can be effective tools when used properly. Distinguish between the **hyphen** (-), which joins things like compound words, and the **em dash**, which is longer (—).

Rule 1. Use em dashes in place of commas when you want to emphasize or draw attention to something. Use **parentheses** in place of commas to minimize the importance of something or to offer an aside. Em dashes are loud, parentheses quiet.

Chanticleer would raise his beak high on a fine summer evening and sing—to the jealousy of neighboring roosters for miles around—such ecstasy had he in his crowing.

(Notice that in fairy tales, characters don’t have great curiosity about such oddities as talking frogs.)

Rule 2. Use em dashes to indicate an interruption in speech or a sudden break in thought.

His younger daughter—now there was another topic that brought red to his face.

Rule 3. Use em dashes to set off nonessential elements that have commas inside them.

The poor widow owned a few farm animals—three hefty sows, three cows, and a sheep dubbed Molly—with which she attempted to eke out a living.

Rule 4. Use parentheses for area codes in phone numbers: (260) 555-1212.

Pattern: **MC:**
illustrating list,
example, or
quotation.

Remember, a main clause must come before a colon.

Advanced: When a main clause follows the colon, use a capital letter under two circumstances:

1) The colon introduces more than one sentence (rare).

2) It introduces a formal statement or quotation.

Example:
Charlemagne stated the dual boon of herbs: “An herb is the friend of physicians and the praise of cooks.”

Em dashes get their name from the fact that they are roughly the width of the upper-case M in the alphabet.

There is no key for a em dash on your keyboard, but there are shortcuts:

On a PC, type **ctrl-alt-minus sign:** specifically, the minus sign on the numeric keypad on the far right of the keyboard.

On a Mac, type **option-shift-hyphen.**

Ellipsis Points ...

Rule 1. Use ellipsis points to signal hesitation or a reflective pause, especially in dialogue in fiction. Rarely use them in formal papers for this reason.

“Ahem...” Lord Ashton cleared his throat conspicuously.

“Um... certainly... the mattress test.”

Rule 2. In composition or academic writing, use three spaced periods (the ellipsis mark) to indicate an omission in a quotation. It is not necessary to use the ellipsis mark at the beginning or end of an excerpted passage.

Rule 3. In quoting another source, if the part you leave out spans more than one sentence, use four ellipsis points. The fourth one is actually a period.

Additional Rules and Concepts

Indentation Rules

Indent at the beginning of appropriate sentences to start new paragraphs. On the student pages, mark sentences that need indenting with the editing notation for a paragraph, which looks like a backwards P: ¶.

In copy work, indent by doing two things: 1. start on the next line, and 2. start writing ½ inch from the left margin.

Begin a new paragraph with the following:

1. A new speaker.

- a.** Start the paragraph at the beginning of the sentence in which someone is speaking, even if the quotation appears later in the sentence. Example: *She cried out with great force, “Thieves!”*
- b.** If a narrative sentence sets up the quotation, it can go in the same paragraph as the quoted sentence. Example: *The stranger came right to the point. “It is cowardly to stand there with a lethal arrow aimed at my heart.”*
- c.** If narrative follows a quotation in a separate sentence but points directly back to the quotation, it can also go in the same paragraph. Example: *“It is cowardly to stand there with a lethal arrow aimed at my heart.” The stranger did not mince words.*

2. A new topic.

- a.** This is the fuzziest to determine. Generally, if the narrator or a character switches topic or the focus, start a new paragraph.
- b.** The problem is that topics are a bit like a camera lens: they can sweep a broad scene or zoom in on details. If not much time is devoted to any of the details, you can safely combine different but related points in one paragraph, just as a photograph of the ocean—which takes in the water, sky, beach, swimmers, and even distant ships—can be as harmonious as one of a single shell on shore.

3. A new place.

- a.** Start a new paragraph when the story switches to a new scene.
- b.** If several switches are made in quick succession, such as a character’s journey to find something, it may be less choppy to keep in one paragraph. Encourage older students to be flexible in making these choices, but if students are more comfortable with a stricter interpretation (hence more paragraphs), that is fine.

You may have noticed that this book does not follow this indentation format. These rules are perfect for students, though, because they typically do not have the typographic tools that book designers have, such as being able to control the space between paragraphs.

4. A new time.

- a.** Same principles as with place: start a new paragraph with a new time unless there are several time shifts in close succession that make sense together in a single paragraph.

The rules for new paragraphs in fiction are less rigid than they are in academic writing. Do not get hung up on the details, but try to follow the main principles and aim for some consistency. If students make a reasonable case based on these principles for something other than what the book suggests, let them choose. In practice, paragraph divisions are clearer and more critical in academic writing, so we can be more flexible with fiction.

Capitalization Rules

Rule 1. Capitalize the first word of a sentence and of a quoted sentence, even when it does not begin the full sentence.

The stranger responded, “You joke like a numbskull!”

Rule 2. Use lowercase to continue interrupted quotations.

“Princess,” he began, “you have a visitor at the door.”

Rule 3. Capitalize proper nouns and words derived from proper nouns.

Sherwood Forest; Robin Hood; Arthurian; Spartan

Rule 4. Capitalize people’s titles when used with a name or as a substitute for a name in a noun of direct address. Do not capitalize titles when used without a name. Do not capitalize family members unless used as a substitute for a name or with a name.

The Sheriff of Nottingham was related to the forester whom Robin Hood killed.

The sheriff was related to the forester whom Robin Hood killed.

“Can you clean the bullet from his wound, Doctor?”

He succeeded his father as king.

Rule 5. Capitalize calendar names (days of the week and months) but not seasons.

the month of June; in the spring; on Wednesday

Rule 6. Capitalize compass directions only when they refer to specific geographic regions, such as the South, or are part of a proper noun, such as North Carolina or New South Wales.

On his journey north Gawain encountered few obstacles. (He is heading in a northward direction but not traveling to a region known as the North.)

Rule 7. Capitalize the first and last words of titles and subtitles and all other words except articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions.

A shy, small girl recited “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

Your Knights of the Round Table are reputed superior in courtesy and arms.

Note: Titles of long works like books, magazines, and movies should be italicized. Titles of short works like poems, short stories, and articles in magazines should be in quotation marks.

An exception to Rule 4 is *sir* or *madam* as a noun of direct address: “*Stand back, sir,*” demanded Robin.

When writing longhand, it is customary to underline words that you will want to italicize.

Numbers Rules

Different style guides give different rules about how to write numbers. These simplified rules follow the principles of the Chicago Manual of Style.

Rule 1. Spell out numbers that can be expressed in one or two words; use figures for other numbers.

The younger of his two daughters had racked up one thousand text messages on her cell phone in a single month!

Rule 2. Spell out ordinal numbers.

In another year the second sister was permitted to rise to the surface.

Rule 3. Use numerals with dates.

Exiting the hall, the stranger called back, “Meet me at the Green Chapel in one year and one day on January 1, 1400.”

Rule 4. When numbers are mixed with symbols, use figures.

“We can expect at least 40% of those invited to attend, or 238 guests.”

Homophones and Usage

Homophones are words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Usage errors occur when students use one word when another is meant, often with words that are spelled similarly.

Encourage students to start a list of troublesome words to consult whenever they write.

Some common errors:

1. *there, their, they’re; your, you’re*

a. *There* is the adverb pointing to a place or point: *over there; there is the spot.*

b. *Their* and *your* are possessive pronouns: *their journey; your weapon.*

c. *They’re* and *you’re* are contractions meanings *they are* and *you are*: *they’re finished; you’re spying.*

2. *to, two, too*

a. *To* is the preposition: *to the soldiers’ aid; to the right.* *To* is also used in infinitives, the “to + verb” form of a verb: *to rush; to seize.*

b. *Two* is the number.

c. *Too* means either *also* or *to an excessive degree* or *too much*. It is easy to remember because it has one too many o’s!

3. *its, it’s*

a. *Its* is the possessive: *its bark* (the bark of the tree).

b. *It’s* is the contraction *it is*: *It’s too bad.* Teach the difference by explaining that the apostrophe in *it’s* is like a little *i*: *it’s*.

c. *Its’* is always incorrect.

4. *then, than*

Use *then* to mean *next* or *immediately afterward*. Use *than* for a comparison. *After Alice drank the potion, she was then shorter than she was a moment before.*

5. *lie, lay*

a. Simplify this problem pair by explaining that someone lies himself down but lays down an object.

b. The three main verb forms:

i. to lie: *lie, lay, lain* (present, past, past participle)

ii. to lay: *lay, laid, laid*

One reason students have trouble with these words is that the past tense of *to lie* is the same as the present tense of *to lay*.

c. For some students, memorizing a simple sentence can help with the confusing past tense forms: *Henny Hen lay down* (something she did to herself) *after she laid an egg* (something she did to an object).

The word *like* is a preposition, not a conjunction, so it starts a prepositional phrase, which ends in a noun and does not have a verb. It should not start a clause.

To compare a noun to a clause, use *as*, *as if*, or *as though* instead of *like*.

6. *like, as*

a. Simple explanation: Use *like* when comparing two nouns; use *as* or *as if* when comparing a noun to an idea (subject + verb).

Not *She arranged her flowerbed as a whale* but *like a whale*.

Not *It looks like it will be a lengthy convalescence* but *It looks as if it will be a lengthy convalescence*.

b. When *as* means in the role, status or function of, it is a preposition.

Treat everything here as your own.

“Come to the Green Chapel or be known as a coward.”

7. *farther/farthest, further/furthest*

Use *farther* and *farthest* as the comparative and superlative forms of *far*, referring to physical distance, no matter how short or long. Use *further* and *furthest* for everything else. *Further* means *to a greater extent* or *additional/in addition*.

It is easy to remember the difference because *farther* and *farthest* derive from *far*, relating to distance. We do not say, “I am going fur down the road”!

She had earned a reputation for beauty reaching into the farthest kingdoms.
(physical distance)

She swam out farther from the shore. (physical distance)

“I will no further descant on such matters.” (to a greater extent)

Some dictionaries no longer distinguish these two, but most careful writers will.

8. *use to, used to*

Use to is substandard English. The correct form is *used to*.

She used to bring pictures she had drawn to Lady Constance.

9. *try and, try to*

Use *try to* when trying to do something. *She tried to sprint across the hill* means she attempted to accomplish this feat. *She tried and sprinted across the hill* does not make sense because *tried* needs an object, as in *she tried climbing*.

10. affect, effect

a. *Affect* as a verb means *to influence, act on, or produce a change in*. *Effect* as a noun is the result of that change. Most of the times this is how we use these words.

Years of indulgence had the obvious effect (noun meaning the result) *of spoiling Dorinda*.

Maybe Dorinda was too self-centered for anyone else to affect (verb form meaning to influence) *her deeply*.

b. *Affect* and *effect* both have a noun and verb meaning, which is one reason they are so confusing. As a noun, a person's affect is his emotional appearance, feeling or emotion. As a verb, *to effect* is to bring about or accomplish something.

11. between, among

Use *between* when dealing with two items, *among* with three or more.

She wandered among the exotic botanical species. (more than two different species of plants)

Dorinda held the napkin between her thumb and first finger. (two fingers)

Idioms

An idiom is an expression that cannot be understood literally, word for word. Example: *We had better go our separate ways*. *Had better* is an idiom meaning *ought to*. No one *has*, or possesses, something called *better*!

Do not expect students to determine parts of speech of words in idioms because often this will not make sense. When sentences begin with idioms, they do not always have to be labeled as certain openers.

Passive versus Active Voice (Advanced)

In active voice, the subject of the sentence is doing the verb action. Most sentences are written in active voice. Example: *The soldier invited the dwarf to warm himself by the fire*.

In passive voice, we start with the person or thing being acted upon, in the example above, the dwarf, and make it the new subject of the sentence: ***The dwarf was invited by the soldier to warm himself by the fire***.

Passive voice follows this pattern: **Person/thing being acted on + be verb + past participle + by someone or something** (either in the sentence or understood). *The dwarf* (person being acted on) *was* (be verb) *invited* (past participle) *by the soldier* (by someone) *to warm himself by the fire*. If the sentence does not have all four elements, it is not in passive voice. That is, not every *be* verb is passive.

In writing, discourage older students from misusing passive voice because it is usually wordy and dull. Do not teach the concept to younger students.

Understanding passive voice helps instructors and older students even at this level with one tricky part of speech identification. When -ed past participles (see Parts of Speech: Verbals, page G-9) follow a *be* verb, it is unclear whether they are subject complements after a linking verb or part of the verb phrase.

One way to tell is that they are verbs if the sentence is in passive voice.

Example: *The castle would be **demolished** by the soldiers*. Test for passive voice: *The castle* (subject being acted upon) *would be* (be verb) *demolished* (past participle) *by the*

soldiers (by someone). Since this sentence is in passive voice, *demolished* is a verb, not an adjective.

The men were famished. Test: *The men* (subject) *were* (be verb) *famished*. *Famished* ends in -ed, so can it be a past participle? No: there is no one *famishing* the men so no *by* someone phrase. This makes *famished* an adjective, not a verb.

Two hundred pounds would be rewarded to the man who delivered Robin Hood to the king. Test: *Two hundred pounds* (subject being acted upon) *would be* (be verb) *rewarded* (past participle) *to the man who delivered Robin Hood to the king*. There is also a “by someone” phrase that is understood: *by the king*. Since this is in passive voice, the past participle is part of the verb and not an adjective.

Past Perfect Tense (Advanced)

Use the past perfect when relating the earlier of two events that occurred in the past. The more recent event is couched in past tense, the earlier event in past perfect. Form past perfect with *had* + the past participle of the verb.

One such frightful deluge swept away (past tense) worthy King William, who *had reigned* (past perfect) in Flovenia for fourteen peaceful years.

Subjunctive Mood (Advanced)

Used infrequently, the subjunctive mood expresses contrary-to-fact conditions with wish or if statements in the third person followed by a *be* verb. For present tense, all subjects take *be*; for past, *were*. To test: Ask if the statement is literally true. If not, use subjunctive.

*Kissing his hand, the little mermaid felt as if her heart **were** already broken.* Her heart is *not* already broken, so the subjunctive is correct: “as if her heart were” rather than “as if her heart was.”

*Fearing lest his name **be** tarnished, Gawain began to despair of ever finding his implacable enemy.* His name will not be tarnished, so the subjunctive is correct: not “Fearing lest his name *is* tarnished,” but “Fearing lest it *be* tarnished.”

Stylistic Techniques

Fix It! stories teach the stylistic techniques of the Institute for Excellence in Writing. The list below reviews these techniques and offers pointers about how dress-ups and sentence openers reinforce grammar.

Dress-Ups

Dress-ups are ways of dressing up writing style, either by using stronger vocabulary (-ly adverb; strong verb; quality adjective) or by making the sentence structure more complex (*who-which* clause; *www.asia.b* clause).

Generally, hold older students to a more rigorous standard than younger students, encouraging all students to use word lists like a thesaurus to build their vocabulary when they work on dress-ups in their own writing.

The words marked as vocabulary dress-ups in the book have varying levels of strength. It is up to teachers to decide whether to count some of these words as “dress-up quality” or to allow words the book does not mark. The goal is to encourage interesting and specific vocabulary.

Two of the dress-ups, -ly adverbs and *www.asia.b* clauses, can also be sentence openers if they start a sentence. Count them as dress-ups if they come later in the sentence but as sentence openers if they are the first word in the sentence.

-ly Adverbs

Found anywhere except the first word in a sentence, this dress-up enriches by adding color and detail. Like other adverbs, the -ly adverb describes or modifies adjectives or verbs. See *Parts of Speech: Adverbs*, page G-10.

The palace accountant *vehemently* complained about the princess’s excessive texting.

Count only -ly words that are adverbs, not imposter -ly’s, which are adjectives, like *princely*, *lonely*, *ugly*, and *ghastly*.

When they are ready, direct students to distinguish true -ly adverbs from adjectives by understanding how these parts of speech work. Even younger students can be asked what part of speech follows the -ly word.

The easiest way to check if an -ly word is an adverb or adjective is to place it in front of a noun. If that makes sense, it must be an imposter -ly (an adjective) since only adjectives can describe nouns. Then check it by placing it in front of a verb. If it works, it is a legitimate -ly adverb.

Examples: *She **cleverly** masqueraded herself as a poor girl.* *Cleverly* comes before and describes a verb (*masqueraded*), so it must be an -ly adverb. It also answers the adverb question *how*: *She masqueraded. How did she masquerade? She cleverly masqueraded.*

*“What nonsense this **silly** frog is talking!”* *Silly* comes before and describes a noun (*frog*), so it must be an imposter -ly, an adjective and not an adverb. It also does not answer the adverb question *how*.

Who-Which Clauses

A *who-which* clause is a dependent clause that begins with *who* or *which*. These clauses deepen content by adding new information to the sentence or minimize choppiness by combining two short sentences. See also Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases: Clauses, page G-16.

Example: *Robin Hood cut straight a hefty staff, **which** measured six feet in length.*

To keep the *who* or *which* from stealing the main verb, remove the *who-which* clause from the sentence and confirm that a complete thought (a sentence) remains. If not, the *who* or *which* may have stolen the main verb.

Example: *A bedraggled young woman, **who** stood at the door.* If I remove my *who* clause, I am left with only *A bedraggled young woman*, which is not a complete thought. I need something more: *A bedraggled young woman, who stood at the door, dripped water into her shoes.*

Use *who* for people, *which* for things or institutions. Animals are a special category. If they are just animals, use *which*. If they are beloved pets or if they take on human characteristics like the frog in “The Frog Prince,” use *who*.

Younger students should form *who-which* clauses by placing the *who* or *which* immediately after the noun it describes. Many *who-which* clauses take commas. For younger students, you could simply require that they put commas around them all and only later teach essential and nonessential *who-which* clauses.

Advanced Who-Which Clauses

Punctuation. *Who-which* clauses are set off with commas if they are **nonessential** but take no commas if they are **essential**.

Essential which clauses usually start with *that* instead of *which*, but do not count these as dress-ups because the dress-up is for practicing *who* and *which* clauses.

That starts an adjective clause when it follows a noun. If it follows a verb, it is a noun clause instead. See under Punctuation: Commas: Rule 15: Essential-Nonessential Elements, page G-24, for further information about this important concept. See also Stylistic Techniques: Advanced Style: Noun Clauses, page G-44.

Question. When *who* or *which* asks a question, it begins a full sentence (a main clause), so *who* or *which* starting a question is not a *who-which* adjective clause, which is a dependent clause. Example: “Who was at the door?” does not count as a dress-up.

Whose. *Whose* is the possessive pronoun, used with people or things.

Examples: *There lived within the glades of Sherwood Forest a famous outlaw whose name was Robin Hood.* *The table whose legs were wobbly threatened to crash to the ground.*

Who versus whom. Use *whom* instead of *who* when *whom* is the object of something (objective case), such as the object of a preposition or a direct object. Use *who* when it is

Who-which clauses

are adjective clauses, which usually modify the noun they follow. Older students may write *which* clauses to modify the entire idea that comes before.

Example: *You have killed the king’s deer, which is a capital offense.* It is not the deer that is the offense but killing it—the full idea expressed in the main clause.

Advanced: The pronouns *who*, *that*, and *which* become singular or plural according to the noun they modify. Since the clause modifies the noun right before it, the verb must agree in number with that noun.

Example: *Gawain was one of the knights who honor courtesy.* The verb *honor* agrees with *knights*, not with *one*.

Also, if you teach *who-which* clauses as a dependent clause, it may help to understand that *who* or *which* is usually the subject of the clause.

in the subjective case, functioning as the subject of the sentence or, rarely, as a subject complement. See Parts of Speech: Pronouns, page G-7.

Trick: *he/him* substitution. If you can revise the sentence and substitute *he* or *they*, use *who*; if *him* or *them*, use *whom*.

*He bellowed his challenge, as if doubting **who/whom** in the hall held rule. He held rule, so *who* is correct.*

*I am not *he* of **who/whom** you speak. You speak of *him*, so *whom*. (object of preposition)*

Invisible *who-which*. *Who-which*'s followed by a *be* verb can be invisible for a more stylish sentence.

Example: *Robin Hood started off from Locksley, ~~which was~~ the town where he lived. All had come to Sherwood Forest, ~~which was~~ a vast, uncharted wood.* In both cases, we could drop *which was* for a more elegant construction.

Strong Verbs

Teach younger students to recognize verbs by filling in these blanks with a form of the word in question: *yesterday he _____; today he _____; tomorrow he will _____.* (Yesterday he pitched; today he pitches; tomorrow he will pitch.)

As the most powerful part of speech, the verb can make or break a sentence. Challenge students to distinguish truly strong verbs from ordinary ones.

Example: Compare ordinary: "It'll be the first thing I'll throw away when I make changes."

versus strong: "It'll be the first thing I'll pitch when I redecorate."

Strong verb dress-ups should be action verbs, not helping or linking verbs. See Parts of Speech: Verbs, page G-8.

Quality Adjectives

Gradually teach students the difference between ordinary and quality adjectives. Quality adjectives are strong because they are more colorful, provide a stronger image or feeling, or add more detail and are more specific than ordinary adjectives. See also Parts of Speech: Adjectives, page G-10.

Example: His advisers realized they had a *daunting* task.

Adjectives describe nouns. Teach how to locate adjectives with this simple test: The _____ person or object (thing).

Examples: *the gurgling brook*. Is *brook* a person or thing? Yes, so *gurgling* is an adjective. Or *the confident stranger*. Is *stranger* a person or object? Yes, so *confident*, which describes the noun, must be an adjective.

www.asia.b Clauses

Initially, teach that dependent clauses may begin with one of these eight subordinating conjunctions: *when, while, where, as, since, if, although, because*, easy to learn by memorizing **www.asia.b**. IEW materials sometimes call these **the www words**. They usually start an adverb clause.

Eventually, students will learn that other words can start dependent clauses too, such as *until, whereas, wherever, whenever, as if, unless*, and sometimes *before* or *after*. See Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases: Clauses, page G-16, and Stylistic Techniques: Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal, page G-42.

A dependent clause cannot stand on its own as a sentence. It needs to be attached to a main clause to be a legal sentence.

Examples:

“Meet me *if* you dare.”

“Your name, Little John, fits you ill *because* you are far from little!”

Robin Hood and his band guffawed loudly *until* the stranger began to grow enraged.

Remain on the other side *while* I quickly make a staff.

Most of the time, a **www.asia.b** word will begin an adverb clause. When an adverb clause occurs mid-sentence (the dress-up), it should not be set off with commas; when an adverb clause starts a sentence (the opener), it takes a comma after the clause. Teach simple patterns to help students remember these rules:

MC AC: no comma when an adverb clause falls in the middle or at the end of a sentence

AC, MC: comma at the end of a clause when the adverb clause comes before the main clause

Advanced: www.asia.b Words

The **www** words **since**, **as**, and **until** sometimes are prepositions instead of conjunctions. You can tell they do not start clauses if there is no subject and verb after them, as in *since childhood* or *as an archer* or *until the next day*. See under Sentence Openers: #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42, for tricks to tell the difference.

The **www** words **as**, **where**, and **when** can start adjective clauses instead of adverb clauses, usually when they follow and describe a noun. Adjective clauses can be essential (no commas) or nonessential (commas). See Punctuation: Commas: Rule 15: Essential-Nonessential Elements, page G-24.

Example: *King Arthur decided to climb to the top of the cliff, where he could drink from the pool of water collected above.* This *where* clause follows a noun that it also describes; since it is nonessential, it needs a comma.

While, **although**, and **whereas** sometimes need a comma before them because they present a contrast to the main clause in the sentence.

Examples: You stand there with a lethal bow to shoot at my heart, *while* I have only a plain blackthorn staff to meet you with.

Hrothgar and Robert had been trying to save his life all along, *whereas* he had been too foolish to listen to them.

www.asia.b

when
while
where
as
since
if
although
because

While and *whereas* technically function as coordinating conjunctions in this case and follow the punctuation pattern **MC, cc MC**, but it is easiest to explain this as needing a comma because of the contrast.

Sentence Openers

Sentence openers are the patterns that sentences begin with. Their obvious advantage is in encouraging more complex sentence structure and variety, which greatly improves the quality of student writing. A second advantage is that openers teach lots of grammar in a backdoor fashion. By teaching the patterns and punctuation that accompany the openers, you will help students master quite a bit of grammar in the context of writing.

#1 Subject Opener

Subject openers essentially begin with the subject of a main clause, although articles and/or adjectives may precede it. If the sentence is shorter than six words, it can be counted as a #6 vss opener instead.

Examples: *He became livid on the subject of modern gadgets.* The subject is *He*.

The convivial company congregated in the great hall. The subject is *company*, but it is still a subject opener because *the* is an article and *convivial* an adjective.

Sometimes #1 sentences invert the usual word order, placing the verb or other word first. For this reason, it helps to explain that the #1 sentence starts with a main clause.

Example: *There were blameless, loyal men at his side who rambled with him through the greenwood shades.* The actual subject is *men*, but the sentence begins with a main clause so is still a #1 subject opener.

#2 Prepositional Opener

Prepositions begin phrases that follow this pattern:

preposition + noun (no verb)

The phrase starts with a preposition and ends with a noun, with no verb inside. Other words may squeeze in between the preposition and noun but never a verb. See under #5 Clausal Opener, page G-42, for the trick to distinguish between #2s and #5s. See also Parts of Speech: Prepositions, page G-11.

Examples:

During these reflections, King Morton shook his head in abject despair.

After a pause she summed it up.

Younger students should practice finding prepositional phrases before identifying the #2 opener, showing how the phrase fits the pattern. Example: *After* (preposition) + *a* (article) + pause (noun). This phrase begins with a preposition, ends with a noun, and has no verb, which fits the pattern. Remind students that the lack of a verb means it must be a phrase and cannot be a clause.

Punctuation: Prepositional phrases of five or more words take a comma after them; with fewer than five, the comma is optional. Let the pause test be your guide for shorter prepositional phrases: use a comma if you need a pause, no comma if you do not.

When short prepositional openers work transitionally (as in *For example*, *In addition*, *On the other hand*), they will need a comma, just as any transitional opener should take a comma. Usually the pause test is sufficient to determine this.

Punctuation rule

note: Grammar books express the punctuation rule more vaguely: long prepositional phrases take a comma; with short ones, the comma is optional.

For most students, a clear cutoff is more helpful than this general principle, and five or more words are usually long enough to warrant a comma.

Advanced Prepositional Phrase

Disguised #2. Sentences starting with some kind of time (*Wednesday; Two weeks ago; The evening of the ball; One night*) followed by the main clause begin with what is effectively a disguised #2, in which a preposition is implied but not stated, as in “One morning...” where “In,” “On,” or “During one morning” is implied. The sentence sounds better without the preposition, but the opener functions as if it were there and is punctuated the same way.

Infinitives. Although infinitives do not fit the usual pattern of prepositional phrases (**preposition + noun**), the *to* in them is still a preposition, used to mark the infinitive of a verb. Infinitives starting sentences may be counted as #2 openers. E.g., *To lend credence to this claim*, one of the most respected authors related a pertinent account.

#3 -ly Adverb Opener

The main difference between an -ly dress-up and -ly sentence opener is the flow of the sentence. Beginning the sentence with the -ly adverb gives a different kind of rhythm than placing it later in the sentence.

Advanced: -ly Adverb Punctuation. LY openers take a comma after them when they modify the sentence but do not need a comma when they modify the verb. The best way to tell what they modify is to put the sentence in two patterns that use the adjective form of the -ly adverb.

Did the subject act in the [adjective] manner? **If so, the -ly modifies the verb: no comma.**

Example: *Resentfully the stranger answered him.* The stranger answered in a resentful manner, so this -ly modifies the verb and therefore does not take a comma.

Is it [adjective] that the rest of the sentence is true? **If so, the -ly modifies the sentence: comma.**

Example: *Unfortunately, Queen Mary was traveling with him at the time.* It is unfortunate that she was traveling with him at the time, so this -ly modifies the whole sentence and needs a comma.

Sometimes, both the comma and no comma are correct but affect the meaning.

Sorrowfully Chanticleer acceded to the counsel of his wife. He acceded, but he did so sorrowfully, with regret.

Sorrowfully, Chanticleer acceded to the counsel of his wife. This opener is the narrator’s warning that Chanticleer made a mistake in acceding to his wife’s advice. It is sorrowful that Chanticleer acceded to his wife’s counsel.

#4 -ing Participial Phrase Opener

Sentence opener #4 sounds easy but can be complicated grammatically. Teach this pattern:

-ing word/phrase + comma + subject/-inger + main verb

It begins with an -ing word (participle) or phrase, then a comma, then the subject of the main clause which is also doing the inging, then the main verb. Check that #4 openers have these four elements and teach students to ask this important question: Is the subject after the comma doing the inging?

Examples: *Gathering their three gifts, the soldiers set out on a journey to visit a neighboring king.* 1. *Gathering their three gifts* is an -ing phrase; 2. there is a comma; 3. the noun after the comma is both the subject of the main clause (*soldiers set out*) and the inger (*soldiers were gathering*); 4. *set out* is the verb. This follows the four steps and is therefore a legal, legitimate #4 opener.

Taking up his bow, Robin Hood shot with unparalleled skill. This also follows the four steps: Robin is both taking up his bow and shooting.

Advanced #4 Opener

There are two main ways students might mislabel #4s.

1. Illegal #4s look like #4s, only the person or thing after the comma is not the one doing the inging. This is known as a **dangling modifier**—an often humorous but still grammatically faulty sentence pattern.

Examples: *Hopping quickly to keep up, she let the frog traipse behind her to the resplendent dining hall.* It is not the princess but the frog that is supposed to be hopping!

Looming nearby in the harbor, she beheld a large ship. The mermaid is not looming nearby but the ship.

Scanning the noble assembly, the horse rode straight to the high dais. The horse is not the one doing the scanning but the Green Knight.

2. Imposter #4s begin with an -ing word so look like #4s but are actually #1 subject openers or #2 prepositional phrase openers. See also Parts of Speech: Verbals, page G-9.

#2s that look like #4s begin with one of these prepositions: *during, according to, regarding, concerning*. The four steps reveal that the pattern does not work.

Examples: *According to state history, the only indisputable test for real princess blood is the mattress test.* The subject after the comma is *test*, which is not doing the *according*, so this sentence does not fit the #4 pattern. It is actually a #2.

During the obligatory dance after dinner, she twirled him around. *She* is not doing the inging. In fact, nobody can “dure” because *during* is not a participle derived from a verb but a preposition.

#1s that look like #4s begin with an -ing word, but it functions as the subject of the sentence. (We call -ing nouns gerunds, not participles). These have no place for a comma and no person or thing mentioned doing the inging.

Examples: *Living at the splendid castle cheered the soldiers.* There is no comma or place for one, nor is there a subject that is doing the inging. The context makes it clear that the soldiers are living there, but the sentence does not use *soldiers* as the subject doing that action. The subject-verb pair is *Living cheered*.

Peering through the curtain left Gawain in wonder. Again, no comma or place for one. The subject-verb pair is *Peering left*.

Invisible #4s are sentences that follow the same pattern as regular #4s, but the -ing word is hidden. These sentences begin with an adjective or adjective phrase followed by a comma plus main clause, with the word *being*, *seeming*, or *appearing* implied at the beginning of the sentence. They are more elegant without the -ing participle but function and are punctuated just like a #4.

IEW instructors sometimes add a seventh opener for sentences starting with a past participle ending in -ed, but it is unnecessary to create a separate category for this since it follows the same pattern as an invisible -ing opener.

Examples: *Quick-witted and agile, Robert compensated for his limitation by an eagerness to please.* Implied: *Appearing* quick-witted and agile, Robert compensated for his limitation.

Relaxed and untroubled, the stranger genially waited for him. Implied: *Being* relaxed and untroubled, the stranger genially waited for him.

Energized by boyish blood, Arthur did not care to lounge at his ease. Implied: *Being* energized by boyish blood, Arthur did not care to lounge at his ease.

#5 Clausal Opener

This is the same as the dress-up and uses the same www words (subordinating conjunctions), except that now this dependent clause starts the sentence and needs a comma after it. Teach the simple pattern: **AC, MC**

Examples:

If possessions were plundered, the yeomen would recapture the goods and return them to the poor.

As he approached, Robin Hood noticed a tall stranger resolutely striding toward the bridge.

When he demanded it back, Dorinda mumbled something about not being able to locate it.

Advanced: #5s versus #2s. The problem with accurately identifying #5s, #2s, and www.asia.b dress-ups is that a few words might be either a preposition or a subordinating conjunction. *After*, *before*, *since*, *until* and *as* can function as either, and while *because* is a subordinating conjunction, *because of* is a preposition.

Two tricks help tell the difference, both bouncing off the fact that prepositional phrases never have a verb and clauses always do.

1. Drop the first word of the phrase or clause in question and look at what is left. If it is a sentence, the group of words is an adverb clause; if it is not, the words form a prepositional phrase.
2. Look for a verb: only #5s and adverb clause dress-ups can have a verb.

Example:

a. After supper, King Morton ordered Dorinda to prepare the Golden Guestroom.

b. After they finished supper, King Morton ordered Dorinda to prepare the Golden Guestroom.

Drop *After* and see what is left in the opener. Sentence *a* starts with a #2 prepositional opener because *supper* is not a complete sentence; sentence *b* starts with a #5 clausal

opener because *they finished supper* is a complete sentence. Also, we know that sentence *b* starts with a #5 because the opener contains a verb (*finished*).

#6 vss, or Very Short Sentence

An occasional short sentence can pack a punch in paragraphs that otherwise have intricate and lengthy sentences.

Examples:

“Tarry for me here.”

Robin Hood set off.

The blow inflamed him.

King Morton esteemed values.

The trick to #6s is that they must be short (two to five words) and they must be sentences (subject + verb and be able to stand alone).

They should also be strong: a vsss = Very Short Strong Sentence!

#T or Transitional Opener

#T works for sentences beginning with interjections, interrupters, or transitional words and expressions. Transitional openers are usually followed by a comma.

Common words and phrases in this class include the following: *however, therefore, then, thus, later, now, otherwise, indeed, first, next, also, moreover, hence, furthermore, henceforth, likewise*. Also included are interjections, such as *oh, ouch, wow, ha*, which can be followed by a comma or an exclamation mark.

#T “Moreover, the august Macrobius explained that his dreams were clear portents.” (transition)

#T Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this pomp and laid aside the heavy wreath! (interjection)

#T “Alas! For this, you have forfeited my heart and all my love.” (exclamatory interjection)

Tip: When you add one of these words or phrases to a main clause, the clause remains a main clause.

#Q or Question

#Q takes care of sentences that ask questions. This teaches students not to mark questions beginning with *who* or *which* as their *who-which* dress-up or questions beginning with words like *when* or *where* as their clausal openers.

#Q Did you ever hear the story of the three poor soldiers?

#Q “What name do you go by, good fellow?”

#Q Where is fair Pertelote?

Advanced Style

Duals and Triples

Deliberate use of dual or triple adverbs, adjectives, or verbs, especially when the words add a different nuance, enriches prose and challenges students to be precise with words chosen. Classic writers of the past like Charles Dickens and persuasive essayists like Winston Churchill have used duals and triples to convey their meaning most powerfully.

Examples:

All who beheld her wondered at her *graceful, swaying* movements.

The ship glided away *smoothly and lightly* over the tranquil sea.

Noun Clauses

A noun clause is a dependent clause used as a noun. It can function in any of the ways that nouns function: subject, direct or indirect object, or object of a preposition. See also Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases: Clauses: Dependent Clauses (Advanced): Noun Clauses, page G-18.

Although noun clauses may begin with many words, those starting with *that* are the main ones highlighted in IEW because students sometimes confuse them with essential adjective clauses.

To tell the difference: If *that* begins an adjective clause, you can substitute *which* and it will still make sense. If *that* begins a noun clause, *which* does not work in its place. Also, noun clauses follow verbs and answer the question “What?” after a verb. Adjective clauses usually follow a noun and describe the noun they come immediately after.

Example:

“I know well that I am the weakest of these illustrious knights.” Can you say, “I know well which I am the weakest of knights”? No, so it is not an adjective clause but a noun clause. It follows a verb (*know*) and answers the question “What?” E.g., *I know*. What does he know? That he is the weakest of these knights.

Invisible Noun Clause: This is a noun clause with the word *that* understood, not stated directly. Example: *He could tell [that] he was going to relish his palace stay.* Sometimes it is more elegant without *that*: *He could tell he was going to relish his palace stay.*

Decorations

Used sparingly, as an artist might add a splash of bright color to a nature painting, these stylistic techniques daringly or delicately decorate one's prose. You can introduce the decorations at any time when teaching IEW writing.

The six decorations are questions, conversation/quotation, 3sss (three short staccato sentences), dramatic opening-closing, simile/metaphor, and alliteration. In *Fix It! Grammar*, you will see the last two.

Similes and Metaphors

A simile is a comparison between two unlike things using the words *like* or *as*. A metaphor, harder to create, is a similar comparison but without the *like* or *as*.

Examples:

The ship dived like a swan between them. (simile)

The waves rose mountains high. (metaphor)

The key to recognizing these figures of speech is that they compare unlike things. For example, to say that a cat is like a tiger is a comparison but not a simile.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same initial consonant sounds in two or more words in close proximity. It adds flavor to writing when used judiciously.

Example: *Arthur was **seeking some** shady relief from the **sweltering sun**.* *Shady* is not part of the alliteration because it does not have the same initial sound as the other *s* words. It is not the letter that matters but the sound. Thus, *celery* and *sound* are alliterative, but *shady* and *sound* are not.

Stressed syllables in the middle of words that carry the same sound can contribute to the alliteration. Example: *I **will award** you **what I win** in the **woods**.*

In academic writing, alliteration usually sounds awkward unless found in a title or the first or last sentence of a paper, where it can appropriately dramatize those parts.

