

# Basic Grammar Review

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It is easy to understand why so many people give up on learning grammar. Most textbooks phrase the basics of grammar usages as if it were calculus. Grammar does not have to be hard or time consuming to learn. Do not let yourself feel discouraged that you did not learn grammar earlier in life. The main thing to focus on is that you are learning grammar now. Learning grammar will shape anyone into a better writer, reader, and overall student. So, let's get started!

## Basic Words:

The first thing to do before anything else in grammar is to learn a few basic words. Once you learn these, you can learn anything else in grammar.

1. A subject is the word that performs the action. It is most commonly seen as a noun, pronoun, or proper noun. An example of that would be, "He wants." or "Cats scratch." In those two short sentences, "He" and "Cats" are the subjects. However, a subject can also be a gerund which is a verb taking the place of a noun. Here is an example of a gerund subject, "Sailing is fun." As you can see, to sail is actually an action verb until it is used as a noun.
2. The next word to understand is a verb. The verb is the word that tells what the subject is doing. There are many types of verbs and verb tenses. The most important ones to know are action verbs, linking verbs, and helping verbs. Action verbs are exactly how they sound; they perform an action. An example of this would be, "Heather runs/sits/kneels/skis." A linking verb is a verb that connects the subject to an adjective or adverb. An example of this would be, "She is pretty." or "Henry became angry." The most common linking verbs are, "is, became, be, and seem." A helping verb does the job of helping other verbs. A good example of a helping verb would be, "The bugs can run away." "Can" is the helping verb for the action verb "run."
3. Adjectives and adverbs are pretty much the same thing. The only difference is what they modify. Adjectives are words that modify nouns. In laments terms, an adjective describes a noun. You would find an adjective in a sentence like this, "The red, bouncy, spotted ball brought us much enjoyment." "Ball" is the noun and it is described through the adjectives of, "red", "bouncy", and "spotted". An adverb describes/modifies any verb, adjective, or other adverb. A great example of this would be, "I quickly ran to the very pretty store." This sentence uses two adverbs. The first adverb is "quickly" which describes the verb "ran." The next adverb is "very" which describes the adjective "pretty".

## Basic Sentence Structures:

There are four types of basic sentence structures that make up any sentence, no matter how long it is.

1. The first sentence structure is a sentence that just includes a subject and a verb. This sentence would look like this, "Ashley eats." or "The dog sleeps."
2. The next type of sentence includes a subject, verb, and noun. That type of sentence would look like this, "Ashley eats food." or "That lady is my doctor." As you can see, the first sentence uses an action verb, while the latter sentence uses a linking verb. Therefore, in a subject, verb, and noun sentence that uses an action verb, the noun would be called a direct object. A direct object is another word for the noun that receives the action of the verb. To break it down a little, you can say that "Ashley" does the action, "eat" is the action, and "food" receives the action. However, the linking verb does not have a direct object. In a sentence that contains a subject, linking verb, and noun, the noun will be called a predicate nominative.
3. The next type of sentence structure contains a subject, verb, and adjective. An example of this would be, "She is fun."
4. The last type of basic sentence structure is that which includes a subject, verb, and adverb. This type of sentence looks like this, "She runs fast."

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## Comma Uses:

Commas are the small thing that so many people use incorrectly. Too few commas can make your sentence sound confusing, while too many commas will make your sentence hard to read. There are six proper and improper uses of the comma. Learn these and you will be a comma using pro.

The Proper Uses of Commas:

1. Use a comma when the sentence starts with an introductory phrase or clause. An example of this would be. "After my mother had fixed a beautiful dinner, our expected guests cancelled."
2. Use a comma in between series of adjectives. A good example of this would be, "A kind, happy, elderly lady winked at me."
3. Place a comma before a conjunction used to join two sentences. Proper use of this type of comma would look like this, "He likes to play baseball, but his family likes him home."

4. Use a comma between words such as, “however” or “which”, and between transitional or parenthetical phrases. Two examples of this would be, “I would love to come, however, I have to study.” or “Evolution, in my opinion, is bizarre.”
5. Use a comma in quotes. The following is a good example: The boy told the teacher, “I will not attend school tomorrow.”
6. Use a comma after direct addresses or after the words “yes” or “no”. Examples of this would be, “John, are you feeling well today?” or “Yes, I can attend the party tonight.”

#### The Improper Uses of Commas:

1. Do not use a comma after a conjunction. An example of what not to do would be, “She was going to the store, but, she decided not to.”
2. Do not use a comma in an indirect quote. An example of what not to do is, “The teacher said that, Christmas was over.”
3. Do not use a comma after a question mark, exclamation point, or period in a quote. An example of what not to write would be the following: “Why do dogs chase cats?”, asked Sarah.
4. Do not use a comma before a parenthesis. An example of what not to do looks a little something like this, “She takes vitamins everyday, (Vitamin A and Biotin) to increase her health.
5. Do not use a comma after the words, “although”, “such as”, or “like”. An example of a sentence misusing this comma rule would be, “Although, she did not go, she was remembered.
6. Do not use commas too often or sporadically. If you are not sure where a comma should be, read the sentence out loud. If it seems like there should be a natural pause, then add a comma.

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#### Colon Uses:

Colons can be considered as the oddball of punctuation. A colon looks like this, “:”. Do not confuse a colon for a semi-colon. Although they may be similar in name and appearance, they have two different jobs.

1. Use a colon to introduce a list of items. An example of this would be, “I will be bringing the following to the beach: sunscreen, a towel, water, and a lunch.”
2. Use a colon to introduce the explanation or definition of something. An example of this would look like this, “Apple: a fruit that grows on trees.”
3. A colon might need to be used in some literary references, such as the Bible. An example of this would be, “She quoted Psalm 19:1.”

## Semi-colons Uses:

The semi-colon can be considered the baby of the colon and comma. Use a semi-colon as a weak period. A semi-colon should never be used like commas.

1. Use a semi-colon in between two related independent sentences. An example of this would be. "My cup is yellow; her cup is blue."
2. Use a semi-colon when using a transitional word (however, in addition, otherwise, therefore) to connect two independent sentences. A great example of this would be, "Jane loves to run; however, her allergies make it hard to go outside."

## Common Grammar Errors:

Do not worry; we all make mistakes from time to time. Here are just a few common grammar errors that are made everyday. Please take note of the grammar errors already discussed. If you can remember these, then you will have a better chance of not doing them.

1. A common grammar error is subject and verb disagreement. An example of what not to do looks like this, "We is going to the park." or "The cricket chirp at night." Is should be replaced with "are", and an "s" should be added to either "cricket" or "chirp".
2. Another common error is misplaced modifiers. An example of this would be, "At the age of ten, my mother showed me her coin collection." This is wrong because the child is ten, not the mother. To fix this all you have to do it switch around the words so that it reads something like this, "My mother showed me her coin collection when I was ten."
3. Another common grammar error is the misuse of apostrophes. Two examples of this are, "Her parent's car was stolen." and "The cat is moving it's food to a safer spot." To correct these two common errors, one would change "parent's" to "parents'" (due to their being two people) and change "it's" to just "its". The only time you would use "it's" is when it is a contraction for "it is".
4. Another mistake many people make when it comes to grammar is using the wrong pronoun. A couple of examples of this would be, "Mary and me are going to the movies." and "Everyone in the class grades their own paper." To correct these two sentences, you should replace "me" with "I" in the first sentence, and change "their" to either "his" or "her" in the second sentence.
5. One last grammar error that many make is writing fragment or run-on sentences. An example of a fragment would be, "When the lilies start to bloom." To fix a fragment, just complete the thought. The fixed fragment sentence could look like this, "When the lilies start to bloom, I would like a dozen of them." An example of a run-on sentence is, "She runs and then she eats and after all that she likes to take a nap." To correct a run-on sentence, just simply break the sentence up into two more sentences. Doing this would result in this, "She runs, and then she eats. After all of that, she likes to take a nap."

If you can remember all of this, then you are well on your way. Just by following these basic grammar rules should help you see a major improvement in your writing and studies. There is a lot of grammar to learn, but with the basics under your belt, you can learn it all in no time.

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