

GRAMMAR & MECHANICS REVIEW SHEET

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1) Comma Splices: Comma splices occur when two *independent clauses* are joined together with only a comma. Generally, a coordinating conjunction (but, and, yet, or nor, so, for, etc.) will do the trick. *Coordinating conjunctions* function to show the relationship between the two sentences.

- Professional athletes can earn huge salaries, some are paid millions of dollars a year.
- Professional athletes can earn huge salaries, and some are paid millions of dollars a year.

2) Pronoun agreement: Once you have chosen the personal pronouns you will use in your writing, be consistent. Don't change from "one" to "your" or from "one" to "their", etc. Be especially aware of switching from singular pronouns to plural pronouns, or vice versa.

	<u>singular</u>	<u>plural</u>
<u>1<sup>st</sup> person</u>	I, me, my, mine	we, us, our, ours
<u>2<sup>nd</sup> person</u>	you, your, yours	you, your, yours
<u>3<sup>rd</sup> person</u>	he, him, his, she, her, hers it, its one, ones	they, them, their, theirs

- If one goes to the party, they can expect to have a good time. (one is singular, they is plural)
- If one goes to the party, one can expect to have a good time.
- If one goes to the party, he or she can expect to have a good time.
- When a student fails a class, they have to repeat it to change their grade. (student is singular, they and their are plural)
- When a student fails a class, he or she has to repeat it to change his or her grade. (all singular)
- When students fail classes, they have to repeat them to change their grades. (all plural)

3) Fragments: If I have written "fragment" by one of your sentences, it means that you haven't written a complete sentence. There are several ways to create fragments. The best way to detect them is to read your sentences aloud, either to yourself or to others.

- Although I had taken the boat out on my own before, having sailed to Nantucket the previous summer under quiet conditions. (dependent clause left hanging)
- In the old orchard we found three apple trees. Each of the same variety. (no verb)

4) Titles: The type of document you are working with determines how you will present its title.

- Books, plays, dissertations, films are underlined: The Red Badge of Courage, Romeo and Juliet or italicized: *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Essays, short stories, chapters, and poems are in quotations: "In Defense of Writing What You Don't Know," "Leaves of Grass," "A Good Man is Hard to Find."

5) The literary present tense is used to talk about literature or art. In other words, if you are talking about a story or the book we're reading, talk about it in the present tense.

- Janeczek writes that...(vs. Janeczek wrote that...)
- In her essay, Caputi argues that...(vs. In her essay, she argued that...)

6) Quotations: There are several general rules to follow with quotations

- Never, ever, ever leave a quotation standing on its own, as if it were a separate sentence (a-e).
- In general, commas and periods go inside the quotation mark, unless you are using parenthetical references (a-c).
- Parenthetical references are included when you want to cite the page number of the quotation you are using. In general, if it is clear whom it is you are quoting, you only need a page number. If it is unclear, you need to put both the author's name and the page number in parenthesis (e).
- (a) Shakespeare's *Hamlet* asks of himself, "To be or not to be, that is the question."
- (b) Shakespeare's *Hamlet* asks of himself, "To be or not to be, that is the question," in an investigation of his inner being.
- (c) Shakespeare's *Hamlet* asks of himself, "To be or not to be, that is the question" (III.ii.265).
- (d) Warner writes that "it's the fiction writer's job to prove the contrary" (45).
- (e) I will argue in this essay that "it's the fiction writer's job to prove the contrary" (Warner 45).
- Quotations are used to help you support your argument. As such, you want to make sure that you don't just plug a quote into an essay without discussing that quote – its content, its significance, its relationship to your thesis, etc.
- If a quote is lengthy, or has a portion that is not relative to your argument, you may use ellipsis (...) in place of that portion of the quote.
- Quotations need to flow smoothly – agree in verb tense and in pronouns – with the rest of your sentence. If you need to, you may alter the quote using square brackets [like this].
  - (original) Warner writes that "I was being given something valuable."
  - (with pronoun agreement) Warner writes that "[she] was being given something valuable."