

## Grammar Rules -- Oral and Written Expression I & II

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### Write Good

- No sentence fragments
- All generalizations are bad.
- Avoid clichés like the plague.
- Don't use no double negatives.
- Stamp out and eliminate redundancy.
- You should never use the second person.
- Don't use question marks inappropriately?
- Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
- Remember to end each sentence with a period
- Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
- A preposition is a bad thing to end a sentence with.
- Take care that your verb and subject is in agreement.
- Excessive use of exclamation points can be disastrous!!!!



### Commas

**Coordinate conjunctions** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so . . . fan boys)

- Mary counsels students, **and** she volunteers at the local hospital.
- John planned to invest his tax return, **but** he bought a computer instead.
- Doug will play the game, **or** he will mow the lawn.
- I don't smoke, **nor** do I eat near people who smoke.
- Sandra won't be going with us, **for** she returned her application too late.
- The bank lowered its rates, **so** we decided to refinance our mortgage.
- I haven't seen the new house, **yet** I know how to get there.

**Subordinate conjunctions** (after, although, as, as if, because, before, if, since, so that, that, unless, until, when, where, while)

- **Because he was late**, she was angry.  
(The adverbial clause **because he was late** modifies the adjective "angry.")
- She was angry **because he was late**.  
(This expresses the same idea without requiring the comma since the subordinate conjunction does not come at the beginning of the sentence.)

## Semicolons

Join related main clauses when a coordinating conjunction is not used.

- I will not paint the house; **you can't make me.**
- Sally built a tree house; **she painted it blue.**

Work with conjunctive adverbs to join main clauses.

- I would like to go to the museum with you; **however, I must visit my dentist instead.**
- Jim had given much thought to his future; **therefore, it came as no surprise when he returned to school.**
- The audience was sparse; **in fact, there were only five people.**
- I want to travel this summer; **accordingly, I will have to save some money this winter.**
- Six people saw the bandit leaving the store; **moreover, one customer even got his tag number.**

Separate items in series that contain commas.

- I packed my suitcase with **old, comfortable jeans; rugged, warm sweaters; and new, freshly starched shirts.**

## Apostrophes

If there is one person and one item, put the apostrophe before the "s."

- My mother's purse held many treasures.
- Can anyone's dog enter the show?
- We listened to the stereo in Chris's new car.

If there is more than one person, regardless of the item, put the apostrophe after the "s."

- The boys' game was a blowout
- The babies' toys are everywhere.
- The Joneses' house is bright purple.

If the noun is already plural, put the apostrophe before the "s."

- The men's lives have changed drastically through the years.
- The Women's Health League is up and running this month.
- The children's projects are coming along nicely.

## Italics

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Use italics when indicating titles of books, magazines, newspapers, plays, poems, and so forth.

- My sister can recite passages from *Walden*.
- *Newsweek* is my favorite magazine.
- Dan just bought a copy of the *L.A. Times*.
- Professor Dorfled can read *Paradise Lost* in Italian.

Alternately, you can underline titles.

- My sister can recite passages from Walden.
- Newsweek is my favorite magazine.
- Dan just bought a copy of the L.A. Times.
- Professor Dorfled can read Paradise Lost in Italian.

## Helpful Hints

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**Q:** When should you cite something in a paper?

**A:** When something comes from a source other than your noggin, it must be cited, even if it's put into your own words.

This includes interviews, books, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, and so forth.

***To cite properly, you must give credit to the source in the paper and at the end, on a separate Works Cited page. (Yes, cite your sources twice.)***

If you have any questions, please ask your professor, review your *Harbrace Handbook*, or refer to the following website:

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_mla.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html)

**Plagiarism = Death. Have a nice day.**