

Insight #3:

Usage Problems

Many student writers struggle with problems of usage—problems that basically involve structure, such as faulty agreement, run-ons and fragments. So another important insight that students of writing must acquire is an awareness of generally accepted conventions of usage—rules, if you like, for structure and word usage generally identified in most publisher's stylebooks.

INSIGHT #3: ***Sentence Structure:*** Writers follow conventions of usage (rules, if you like) that are followed by publishers and editors of newspapers and magazines, news Web sites and books.

Certain writing practices have evolved over the years that professional writers are required to follow. Publishers and editors follow stylebooks on usage that have become more and more uniform.

Students should become familiar with the usage errors that often occur in themes and papers. The following information and exercises should help them avoid many of these errors in their writing. In other words, the exercises will help them to become conscious of such errors in the sentences they write or read.

USAGE PROBLEMS—STRUCTURE

Just as an understanding of sentence structure—subordination and coordination—can help one understand punctuation, it can also help one understand usage problems, as well. Many of the errors in usage can be understood and eliminated by seeing how faulty structure often causes usage errors.

Some of the most frequent sentence errors in usage—such as fragmentary sentences and faulty parallelism, for instance—often result from a lack of sentence sense, from a lack of awareness of the subordination and coordination in sentences.

Listed below are the usage errors most frequently made:

A. FAULTY AGREEMENT [AG]

Faulty Subject-Verb: One error in usage frequently occurs because the writer is unaware of interruptions: choosing a verb that is not appropriate for the subject. Some texts call such an error “lack of agreement.” The verb does not “agree” with the subject.

Example: U.S. astronauts, especially those who have been on many space shuttle missions, very often receives lucrative offers to speak about their experiences.

Often, when there is a long interruption, the writer forgets what the subject of the sentence is and picks a verb that is not appropriate.

An awareness of subordination—especially of interruptions—can help the student writer avoid faulty subject-verb combinations.

Faulty Pronoun Agreement: When a pronoun does not agree with its antecedent—the word to which it refers—it is considered unacceptable usage.

Example: Every student in the class completed their project on time.

Example: A number of players paid his own plane fare to attend the football game.

Every student is singular and the pronoun referring to it needs to be singular—his. A number is plural; the pronoun needs to be plural—their.

Faulty Word or Phrase Agreement: Words and phrases must agree with other words and phrases in the sentence that they repeat or relate to.

Example: U.S. astronauts, a country that helped build the space station, made significant discoveries in space.

The interruption—“a country that helped build the space station”—does not agree, in a sense, with astronauts. Phrases in that position either repeat the noun before them or relate logically in some way to them. This one does neither. It does not agree with the word it is supposed to relate to.

B. RUN-ON OR COMMA SPLICE [RNN]

Run-ons: A run-on sentence is also considered a serious error in usage. It is a group of words that is more than a sentence. The writer does not place appropriate punctuation where the sentence should end—a period, a semicolon or a colon. Again, awareness of structure can help the student avoid writing a run-on sentence.

Example: The Russians were the first to orbit a man in space they were also the first to orbit a woman in space.

The sentence should stop after space. Students of writing must somehow acquire enough sentence sense to recognize the main parts and subordinate elements of all sentences they write—where they begin, where they end.

Comma Splice: If a comma is used where the sentence ends, where a semicolon or a period should be used, it is a specific type of run-on sentence—often called a comma splice.

C. CORRECT In the exercises that follow, the letter C will be used as an answer when sentences are correct.

D. DISTORTION [DIS]

Distorted Sentences: Distortion in sentences often occurs because the writers are not aware of the structure of the sentences they are writing—not aware of its main part, nor of its subordination and coordination.

Example: Some important discoveries in space have been made on experimental flights, originally planned perhaps for some other goal, make invaluable contributions to space technology.

The last element of the sentence—“make invaluable contributions to space technology”—does not fit with the rest of the sentence.

Note: The word distortion is generally used to label sentences that seem to be “a hopeless mess”—sentences in which the usual order has gone berserk. However, a flawed sentence should not be labeled “a distortion” if it has a faulty agreement, is a run-on or a comma splice, has faulty parallelism, is a fragment, has faulty modification or no clear pronoun reference. In other words, if the sentence’s error cannot be identified, it should be called a distortion.

E. FAULTY PARALLELISM [PL]

Faulty Parallelism: A sentence with faulty parallelism has a faulty compound or series. Usually the error is the result of having different grammatical elements joined with and or some other coordinate conjunction or having different grammatical elements placed in a series.

Example: The early unmanned space flights were made primarily to test computer control systems and collecting data about atmospheric conditions in space.

Changing collecting to to collect would make the two elements parallel—grammatically alike, coordinated.

Example: A space flight requires close coordination of three separate units: a launch complex, a control center and retrieving the space vehicle.

Complex and center are nouns that identify definite organizations in the space program. The third unit should be identified with a similar noun—not one that identifies an activity or an organization. An expression such as a retrieving task force would be parallel (coordinated) with the other two.

An awareness of coordination—of compounds and series—will enable a writer to avoid faulty parallelism.

F. Fragment [F]

Fragments: A fragment is considered a serious writing error. It is treating part of a sentence—often an introduction or an extension—as though it were a sentence.

Example: When the Russians took the lead in space exploration with the launching of Sputnik I. The United States began an intensive rocket development program. Designed primarily to facilitate eventual moon landings.

Note: Most stylebooks and editors accept fragments in which essential elements are clearly understood. Example: He thought I was a thief. How absurd! (it was to think I was a thief). Or: What went wrong? Plenty. (of things went wrong.)

G. FAULTY MODIFICATION [MD]

Most grammar tests point to the following three faulty modifiers as the ones most frequently appearing on student papers:

Misplaced Modifiers: In most sentences, modifiers—adjectives and adverbs, both words and phrases—are placed either immediately before or after the words they modify. Often when they are not so placed, they modify some other word—usually resulting in unintended confusion or humor.

Example: John found a dog with a collar named Snooper. [recast sentence so named Snooper follows dog]

Example: Harry almost ate half of the pie. [almost modifies half, not ate] Harry ate almost half of the pie.

Squinting Modifiers: Some modifiers could relate to several words in the sentence and it is not clear what the writer intended.

Example: The speaker said last year the schools needed money. [last year could modify said or needed]

Example: His coach told him frequently to work out. [frequently could modify told or to work out]

Dangling Modifiers: Introductory modifiers that do not appropriately relate to the subject of the sentence are referred to in most grammar texts as dangling modifiers.

Example: To earn money for the trip, candy had to be sold at each game. [candy can not earn money nor take a trip; students can] To earn money for the trip, students had to sell candy at every game. [subject must relate logically to the introductory modifier]

Example: Before traveling to the moon, the United States had to develop new computers. [the United States can't travel to the moon]

Example: To improve relations with the Arab countries, ships carrying oil had to be allowed to use the canal. [ships are not interested in, nor capable of, improving relations with Arab countries]

H. NO CLEAR PRONOUN REFERENCE [RF]

Pronouns must have a clear antecedent (referent). If there is no noun—explicit or implied, in the sentence or previous sentences—to which the pronoun can clearly refer, the sentence is unacceptable.

Example: When Rhodesia declared its independence from England, they place an embargo on its products

The sentence does not have a noun to which the plural they can refer. They cannot refer to singular Rhodesia or England. To correct such an error, they could be changed to the United States, for instance, or some other noun. Its, the other pronoun in the sentence, clearly refers to Rhodesia.

Example: In a recent article on Africa, it shows how South Africa is improving its image in the West.

It does not have an antecedent; change it shows to a writer notes, an author explains, etc. Its clearly refers to South Africa.

Example: The country has vast resources of oil, but this is not publicized. [This what? this asset? this advantage? supply a noun for clarity]

The following exercises deal with errors in usage that students often make because they are not conscious of subordination and coordination in sentences. To avoid such errors, students of writing must develop an awareness of, some sensitivity to, the introductions, interruptions, extensions and parallel elements that it is possible for writers to use in sentences. From this awareness of sentence structure, the student writer should be able to write sentences that read well and should be able to use subordination and coordination appropriately.

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Exercise #13:

Usage

USAGE:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Faulty Agreement | E. Faulty Parallelism |
| B. Run-on or Comma Splice | F. Fragment |
| C. Correct | G. Faulty Modification |
| D. Distortion | H. No Clear Pronoun Reference |

Directions: Pick the letter above that most appropriately identifies the usage error in the sentence.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. The life-support system includes—oxygen, food and water—are carried in stainless steel tanks. | 1. _____ |
| 2. The Russians were the first to place an artificial satellite—Sputnik I—in space; the first to place a man—Yuri Gagarin—in space; and also placed the first woman in space: Valentina Tereshkova. | 2. _____ |
| 3. When the Russians first launched their Sputniks into outer space to the amazement of the whole world, including the U.S. | 3. _____ |
| 4. Inside an Apollo lunar module, the ground control center maintains constant communication with the astronauts. | 4. _____ |
| 5. Russia, as well as the United States, have launched several communication satellites. | 5. _____ |
| 6. Russia was the first nation to put a man into space the United States was the first nation to put a man on the moon. | 6. _____ |
| 7. To insure accurate course determination, they use mini computers. | 7. _____ |
| 8. Most astronauts are officers in some branch of the military; a few are civilians attached to U.S. space agencies. | 8. _____ |

9. In Russian, especially during the '60s, conducted valuable experiments in space rescue operations. 9. _____
10. Russia, in the early 1960s, sought to lead the world in space probes, to excel in satellite production, the first to place a man in space and to surpass the U.S. in space communication systems. (not D). 10. _____
11. Astronauts and cosmonauts who have landed on the moon—making extremely significant contributions to technology. (not D). 11. _____
12. Alan B. Shepard, Jr., who made the first U.S. space flight, also made a lunar landing, January 31, 1971. 12. _____
13. Russia made its first manned orbital flight on April 12, 1961, the U.S. did not make its first manned orbital flight until February 20, 1962. 13. _____
14. The Apollo command module, a mission that carried men to the moon, had several back-up control systems. 14. _____
15. Russia has two very celebrated space heroes. Yuri Gagarin, the first man to orbit the earth, and Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to orbit the earth. 15. _____
16. Space probes, especially those that go beyond the gravitational force of the moon, advances man's knowledge of the universe. 16. _____
17. The Russians had the lead in the space race during the late 1950s and early 60s the U.S., however, definitely pulled ahead in the late '60s. 17. _____
18. In a recent article, it shows that in the late 50s the Russians led the U.S. in space exploration. 18. _____
19. The Russians, however, only reveal information about their space successes; they seldom tell the world about their failures. 19. _____
20. The Russian space agency, which trained the first cosmonauts, deserve a great deal of credit for early space discoveries. 20. _____
21. The U.S. space agency, which discovered the mysterious Van Allen radiation belts that astronauts must understand. 21. _____
22. Circling the moon, the Houston Space Center was careful to pick a flat area on which to land. 22. _____
23. At the Apollo, spaceport on Cape Kennedy, are carried on barges and crawlers to the launch pad. 23. _____
24. Space technology will enable man to travel to other planets, to build better communication satellites and probing space for new data on the universe. (not D). 24. _____
25. The U.S. Space Agency, developed and promoted by both Eisenhower and Kennedy, controls all aspects of space missions. 25. _____

Name _____ Date _____

Exercise #14:

Usage

USAGE:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Faulty Agreement | E. Faulty Parallelism |
| B. Run-on or Comma Splice | F. Fragment |
| C. Correct | G. Faulty Modification |
| D. Distortion | H. No Clear Pronoun Reference |

Directions: Pick the letter above that most appropriately identifies the usage error in the sentence.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Africa not long ago was called the Dark Continent—
is still difficult to get information about many
parts of the interior. | 1. _____ |
| 2. To promote tourism in Africa, tigers provide big-game
hunting for many American and European sportsmen. | 2. _____ |
| 3. African countries export nearly three fourths
of the world's palm oil, about one third of the
world's peanuts and sisal is exported, too—almost
two-thirds of the world's supply. (not D). | 3. _____ |
| 4. In some African countries, one can only hunt during
certain seasons, and then only in certain restrict-
ed areas. | 4. _____ |
| 5. Two powerful African countries have black majori-
ties ruled by white minorities. South Africa and
Rhodesia, both of which have many more black citi-
zens than white. | 5. _____ |
| 6. Most African people, especially countries that have
recently gained independence, support the idea of
pan-Africanism. | 6. _____ |
| 7. Tanzania's Nyerere, whose experiments with social-
ism draw much attention through Africa. | 7. _____ |

8. In much of Africa, they lack modern industrial development. 8. _____
9. Many African countries have—rich natural resources—do not have enough financial resources. 9. _____
10. Zaire's Mobutu, a strongman who sees his nation as a leader toward African unity. 10. _____
11. Strong national movements force European colonial powers to grant independence to many of their African possessions, six countries gained their independence during the 1950s. 11. _____
12. African farmers grow most of the world's supply of—cocoa, palm oil, peanuts and sisal—such as ebony and mahogany. (not A). 12. _____
13. The price of coffee and tea, two of African's principal exports, remain fairly high. 13. _____
14. Most African nations have joined regional organizations—a people who have a history of unity and cooperation. 14. _____
15. Many African countries have rich natural resources, only a few, however, have the financial means with which to develop them thoroughly. 15. _____
16. In the 1960s, the Nigerians were embroiled in a civil war, in the early 1970s, however, they resolved their differences. 16. _____
17. When African nations began their drive for independence from European nations. 17. _____
18. To thousands of tourists visit Africa to make—trips to the world's longest river. 18. _____
19. Most African farmers work their land in the old-fashioned ways of their ancestors. 19. _____
20. Flying over the vast deserts and endless jungles, Africa is a continent that has immense potential—primarily because of its abundant natural resources. 20. _____
21. In 1960, Niger received its independence; in 1965, Rhodesia declared itself independent. 21. _____
22. Diamonds used in industry come from Angola, Ghana, Tanzania and ore rich in other minerals. (not D) 22. _____
23. Africa, the second largest continent, is the scene of a great political revolution, as recently as 1950, only four African countries were independent. 23. _____
24. The government of Kenya passed laws against hunting animals that were ridiculous. 24. _____
25. To exploit their natural resources, the African nations have invited other nations to invest in its industries, have joined the world bank, have formed trade alliances and have attempted to stabilize its economy. 25. _____

USAGE PROBLEMS—WORDS

Aside from errors in the use of subordinate and coordinate elements, students often make mistakes in their choice of words—especially in instances where there are several similar words to choose from.

To eliminate most such errors from their papers, students of writing should do well to familiarize themselves with the following eight areas in which errors in the choice of words often occur.

A. WRONG HOMONYM [HOM]

Wrong Homonym: A few words in English are pronounced the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings and uses: for instance, **there and their; sight, site and cite.** Also, a few words are pronounced and spelled almost in the same way: for instance, **moral and morale; quite, quiet and quit.**

Students must be careful to use the correct form when they use such words. Some other examples include **council, counsel, consul; die, dye; fair, fare; faze, phase; hear, here; hole, whole; new, knew; no, know; led, lead; plain, plane; profit, prophet; roll, role; sore, soar; than, then; weak, week;** etc.

Unless students are careful in their choices of words, they will often make the error of using a word that merely sounds like, or is spelling approximately like, the word that should be used. The error is often called a malapropism.

Example: The president of the club proceeded his resignation speech with a warning about financial trouble ahead for the organization. [preceded is the correct word]

Example: The country's of Africa were encouraged to join the alliance. [countries is the correct word]

Example: The lunar craft has it's own power supply. [its is the correct word]

Example: When its cold outside, cars need special care. [it's is correct]

B. TRITE EXPRESSION [TRI]

Avoid trite, overused expressions that have become clichés—such as beat a hasty retreat, believe it or not, better late than never, couldn't care less, crying shame, few and far between, first and foremost, in the last analysis, it stands to reason, last but not least, let's face it, never ending, sneaking suspicion, tender mercies, truth is stranger than fiction, etc.

Also, **avoid trite overused figures of speech—such as the following similies** (figures of comparison that use like or as: pretty as a picture, brave as a lion, run like a deer, sly as a fox, spreading like wildfire, white as snow, quick as a wink, etc.

Also **avoid trite metaphors** (figures of comparison that say something is what it cannot be, or does something it cannot do, for the sake of comparison): in the lap of luxury, bolt out of the blue, burn the midnight oil, dire straits, the last straw, rear its ugly head, rude awakening, a shot in the arm, sink or swim, strike while the iron is hot, the straight and narrow, up in arms, etc.

C. CORRECT

D. REDUNDANT [RED]

Avoid unnecessary repetition of key words in sentences or adjoining sentences.

Example: The problem of providing enough classrooms is this country's major problem.

Example: Congress quickly approved the measure. Congress generally looks with favor on such action. [It would avoid unnecessary repetition]

There is a fine line between what is necessary and unnecessary repetition. But if it does not sound right, choose a pronoun or a synonym or a synonymous phrase.

E. SUPERFLUOUS [SUP]

Avoid unnecessary repetition of ideas and information in sentences or adjoining sentences. (Note that redundancy involves sound—repetition of the same sound, the same word: superfluous does not relate to sound.)

Example: In the next ten years, Africa will in the future be basically and primarily interested in developing its natural resources and mineral wealth.

Example: Teachers agree these days with the concept that the marking system used in most schools should be changed.

The same words are not repeated, but the same ideas and information are repeated unnecessarily.

F. UNIDIOMATIC [IDI]

Unidiomatic Expressions: Every language, over the years, acquires idioms—usages and expressions that are preferred to—thought to be more acceptable than—similar expressions for no logical reason other than “that is the way it is used (said) by educated people.”

Example: The final examination was different then the mid-semester. [from is considered idiomatic—correct]

Following are a few examples of idiomatic and unidiomatic expressions:

Idiomatic [acceptable]		unidiomatic [unacceptable]
* <u>fewer</u> people	not	<u>less</u> people
* <u>a number</u> of people	not	<u>amount</u> of people
accompanied <u>by</u> Harry	not	accompanied <u>with</u> Harry
abhorrent <u>to</u> an idea	not	abhorrent <u>of</u> an idea
take advantage <u>of</u> him	not	take advantage <u>over</u> him
pertinent <u>to</u> the argument	not	pertinent <u>with</u> the argument
similar <u>to</u> mine	not	similar <u>with</u> mine
plea bargaining <u>is a procedure</u>	not	plea bargaining <u>is when</u>
baseball <u>is a game</u>	not	baseball <u>is where</u>
a violation <u>of</u> our standards	not	a violation <u>to</u> our standards
incurred <u>by</u> World War II	not	incurred <u>from</u> World War II
*the words <u>fewer</u> and <u>a number</u> should be used for things one <u>can count</u> ; <u>less</u> and <u>amount</u> , for things one <u>cannot count</u> .		

G. GRAMMATICAL ERROR [GR]

Wrong Pronoun Case (form): Pronouns in English are used in one form when they are used as subjects or subjective complements of the sentence or clauses (sentences within the sentence). They are used in another form when they are used as objects of verbs or prepositions.

Example: They are the ones who received the money. [They and who are subjects; They is the subject of are in the sentence; who is the subject of received in the clause—a subordinate sentence within the sentence]

Example: We saw them—whom our classmates had elected as officers. [them and whom are objects; them is the object of the verb saw in the main part of the sentence; whom is the object of had elected in the clause—a subordinate sentence within the sentence]

Example: This is he. Who is your teacher? [he and who are subjective complements—predicate pronouns; therefore, the subject form is used]

Subject form: he, she, I, we, who, they and you. (sometimes called nominative form)

Object form: him, her, me, us, whom, them and you.

To be verbs: am, are, is, was, were, be, being, have been, etc. plus verbs that are often substituted for to be verbs—become, seem, grow, appear, look, feel, smell, taste, remain, stay, prove, sound, etc. (these verbs take subjective complements—predicate pronouns in subject form—rather than objects—in object form)

Wrong Pronoun Number: (singular, plural) (agreement) Students—because they have used the language so long—are familiar with singular and plural subjects and usually pick appropriate verbs to go with them—that agree with them. Occasionally, however, students make mistakes in keeping nouns and pronouns consistent in number (consistently plural or singular) throughout the sentence.

Example: A student must be careful when they choose their courses. [they and their are not the same number as A student; they and their are plural; A student is singular]

Wrong Adjective Adverb: Often students choose an adjective when they should use an adverb and vice versa.

Example: He plays good. [should be an adverb like well to modify verb plays]

Example: He did not follow the directions careful—as he was advised to do. [adverb carefully is needed to modify the verb follow]

Example: He feels badly. [should be adjective bad after linking verb feels; feels here equals is or some to be verb and should be followed by something that can be a subjective complement—like an adjective]

Remember! After to be verbs (listed under Wrong Pronoun Case above), adjectives, not adverbs, should be used. Adverbs cannot be subjective complements; adjectives can be.

Wrong Verb: As was noted previously in this chapter—under faulty subject-verb—the wrong verb is sometimes chosen when the writer is unaware of an interruption and chooses a verb that does not agree with the subject. In addition, there are troublesome verbs—such as lie and lay—and irregular verbs—such as sing, sang, sung—that can easily be use erroneously:

Some troublesome verbs:

These must have objects—

raise	raised	raised
set	set	set
lay	laid	laid

Example: He laid the book on the table. [correct—book is the object]

These must not have objects—

rise	rose	risen
sit	sat	sat
lie	lay	lain

Example: The dog lay on the sidewalk. [correct—no object]

Some irregular verbs:

swing	swung	swung	burst	burst	burst
hang	hung	hung [picture]	see	saw	seen
hang	hanged	hanged [executed]	take	took	taken
do	did	done	give	gave	given
swim	swam	swum			

Example: To improve its profit margin, the company has launched a public relations program and went to sales and promotion projects. [the verb form went does not go with has that is common to both launched and went; change to gone; has gone is correct.]

Avoid double negatives, comparisons and connectives: Be careful to avoid using two conjunctions, for instance, when one is appropriate.

Double Negatives: Students don't want to buy no more books than they need. (two negative words; only one is needed)

Double Comparisons: He will become more stronger if he exercises regularly. (more and er make the same comparison)

Double Conjunctions: But he did not prove to be as versatile, however, as last year's pitcher. (both words make a transition; only one is needed)

Avoid Omissions: Wrong: Mark will go to with Jim. (obvious omission of needed words between to and with.)

Avoid: The moon shot brought about many new changes in spite of predictions to the contrary. (changes in what?)

Avoid: For years, Smokey the Bear, America's most famous symbol, has served the U.S. National Park Service loyally and effectively. (symbol of what?)

Avoid: This was brought up later during the business meeting. (This what?)

H. INAPPROPRIATE EXPRESSION [INA]

Inappropriate Words: (weak words, slang, jargon, substandard words, etc.) Sometimes errors in usage result from the choice of inappropriate words—not merely the wrong use of appropriate, acceptable words—as is true in most categories above.

Some inappropriate words for most student papers are generally found in these areas:

Weak words: Some words are so general in meaning they are of little value in writing—such words as nice, terrific, wonderful, splendid, etc.

Slang: Slang expressions are not generally considered acceptable in student papers—unless they are used to depict a character's speech.

Example: The Supreme Court decision clobbered the practice of giving rebates to large companies. [stopped or curtailed would be appropriate]

Jargon: Avoid words that are used exclusively by one group.

Example: The students miced the shafts and trued the bearings before reassembling the motor. [measured the shafts and adjusted the bearings would be more appropriate in student papers]

Substandard Words (illiteracies): ain't, git, scairt, snuck, he learned me, tooken, etc.

Invented Words: irregardless, confliction, unrational, etc.

Name _____ Date _____

Exercise #15:

Usage (words)

- A. Wrong Homonym [hom] [words have same or nearly same pronunciation]
- B. Trite Expression [Tri] [clichés]
- C. CORRECT
- D. Redundant [red] [unnecessary repetition of the same word/words]
- E. Superfluous [Sup] [unnecessary repetition of ideas or information]
- F. Unidiomatic Expression [Idi]
- G. Grammatical Error [Gra] [wrong pronoun, adjective, verb, etc; double negatives, prepositions, etc; lack of agreement, etc.]
- H. Inappropriate Expression [Ina] [weak words, slang, jargon, substandard words, invented words, etc.]

Directions: Pick the letter above that most appropriately identifies the usage error in the sentence. [Each letter is used 2, 3, or 4 times.]

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. The students could not sell there textbooks back to the bookstore. | 1. _____ |
| 2. My uncle gave Bill and I tickets to the all-star game. | 2. _____ |
| 3. The members of the committee were quite surprised when they heard the president's testimony. | 3. _____ |
| 4. When a student makes out his schedule, the student must be careful to indicate the course number. | 4. _____ |
| 5. Nationalism began to rear its ugly head in new African nations. | 5. _____ |
| 6. I think the summer months are the most enjoyable of the year. | 6. _____ |
| 7. There were less education majors enrolled for winter quarter than there were for fall quarter. | 7. _____ |
| 8. The team will go to the Orange Bowl—irregardless of its win-loss record. | 8. _____ |

9. In labor relations, collective bargaining occurs when representatives of both labor and management work out new contractual agreements. 9. _____
10. There have been a number of conflictions in the Middle East over oil rights. 10. _____
11. The student counsel acted on the proposal at its last meeting. 11. _____
12. Many of the players paid his own way to the all-star game. 12. _____
13. The scholarship was given to Bill Stewart. Bill Stewart was selected as the outstanding athlete of the year. 13. _____
14. Most students feel badly about the arbitrary dropping of courses from the curriculum. 14. _____
15. A number of students who received scholarships were not required to take their final examinations. 15. _____
16. She was so adult about accepting responsibility for making the error and immediately corrected the error. 16. _____
17. A large amount of young people came to the rock concert held in the college's auditorium. 17. _____
18. It was them who determined which textbook should be used. 18. _____
19. Harry Brown, who was the coach's choice, would really burn the midnight oil. 19. _____
20. The amount of people who attended the soccer game surprised school officials. 20. _____
21. Both the faculty and the students have active rolls in determining curriculum. 21. _____
22. All during the meeting, the computer, that could have been used to clarify many points, sat along the wall unused. 22. _____
23. Unfortunately, the plot to oust the dictator was nipped in the bud. 23. _____
24. The punctuation mark most often used is the comma. The comma is used, for instance, to set apart all interruptions. 24. _____
25. I believe that every person on earth should have the chance to choose the kind of work or job he or she wants to do. 25. _____

Name _____ Date _____

Exercise #16:

Usage (words)

- A. Wrong Homonym [hom] [words have same or nearly same pronunciation]
B. Trite Expression [Tri] [clichés]
C. CORRECT
D. Redundant [red] [unnecessary repetition of the same word/words]
E. Superfluous [Sup] [unnecessary repetition of ideas or information]
F. Unidiomatic Expression [Idi]
G. Grammatical Error [Gra] [wrong pronoun, adjective, verb, etc; double negatives, prepositions, etc; lack of agreement, etc.]
H. Inappropriate Expression [Ina] [weak words, slang, jargon, substandard words, invented words, etc.]

Directions: Pick the letter above that most appropriately identifies the usage error in the sentence. [Each letter is used 2, 3, or 4 times.]

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. The boys were suspended because they had snuck out. (not G) | 1. _____ |
| 2. The secretary took the folder from the desk and lay the pamphlet down in its place. | 2. _____ |
| 3. The president of the college was accompanied with the dean of students at the accreditation hearing. | 3. _____ |
| 4. The directions were presented very explicit in class discussions about the assignment. | 4. _____ |
| 5. Several company's refused to join the organization. (not G) | 5. _____ |
| 6. The report was given to we who were on the committee. | 6. _____ |
| 7. Television is where students acquire their sense of values and their images of society. | 7. _____ |
| 8. The practice was a violation of board policy, accepted and ratified by the student senate. | 8. _____ |

9. The members of the team new their chances of winning the conference were not very good. 9. _____
10. A number of players paid their own plane fare to attend the bowl game. 10. _____
11. India has had many tough breaks since she acquired her independence from England. 11. _____
12. There folder lay unused on the table all during the conference. 12. _____
13. The ambassador was such a sourpuss he was not well received in the diplomatic community. 13. _____
14. We arose at the crack of dawn to pack our gear for the long hike. 14. _____
15. The Red Cross helps out primarily in major disaster areas. The Red Cross relies primarily on contributions from individuals. 15. _____
16. I think all eighteen-year olds, as far as I'm concerned, should be able to vote. 16. _____
17. The democracies had to strike when the iron was hot. 17. _____
18. Travel through space to the moon is, in some ways, dangerous and hazardous. 18. _____
19. His new car is similar with the one he was using when he had the accident. 19. _____
20. The committee presented a good report on the college's extracurricular policies. 20. _____
21. The committee sure did a thorough investigation of all the evidence. 21. _____
22. It is my belief that space travel can serve no useful purpose or can have no practical application. 22. _____
23. Russia was quick to exploit its lead in the space race. Russia always uses whatever it can for propaganda purposes. 23. _____
24. Russia's Sputniks hit the world like a bolt out of the blue. 24. _____
25. The danger in space is the danger of rupturing the life-support system. 25. _____

QUOTATION MARKS:

APOSTROPHES:

HYPHENS:

Quotation marks are used, of course, around direct quotes and also around titles of selections that are a part of a book, newspaper, magazine, pamphlet, etc.—such as an article in a magazine or a poem in a book.

Most errors in the use of quotes appear to occur because they are often misplaced in relation to other punctuation marks. Remember!:

1. Commas and periods always go inside quotes (",.")—even if in some situations it seems inappropriate, such as in a series of titles. Ex.: “Experimental People,” “On Texas,” “Skin In The Game,” “Her Again” and “Berlin Nights” are all good articles on contemporary culture in the March 24, 2014, issue of *The New Yorker*, a leading magazine of reportage, commentary and fiction. (The commas after . . . Texas,” and . . . Game,” seem misplaced but they are not; it would be wrong, by most stylebooks, to have . . . Texas”, and . . . Game”,)
2. Semicolons, colons and dashes always go outside quotes (“; “: and “—)
3. Question marks and exclamation marks sometimes go inside, sometimes go outside quotes, depending on whether just the quote is a question (inside) or the quote plus additional material constitute the question (outside)

Example: Jim asked, “Did you pass the test?” [only the quote is a question; question mark is inside] Did the teacher say “Hand in your papers”? [whole sentence is a question; question mark is outside]

Direct Quotes: There are three strong conventions (practices) concerning quotes:

1. **Most direct quotes are complete sentences with a “he said” expression tacked on the form of an introduction, interruption, or extension:**

Example: He said, “The United States should use more of its vast reserves of coal.”

“The United States,” he said, “should use more of its vast reserves of coal.”

“The United States should use more of its vast reserves of coal,” he said.

In the first example above, he said is an introduction; in the second, it is an interruption; and in the third, it is an extension. That interpretation squares with punctuation practices that have evolved and become very solid.

2. **Often direct quotes are preceded by more than a he said expression. Sometimes it is more of he said [what]:**

Example: He said our country should use another energy source: “The United States should use more of its vast reserves of coal.”

Now the structure is different: the first part is the main part; the quotation is the extension. That interpretation squares with the use of the colon before the quote—another solid practice that has evolved.

- 3. Often less than a complete sentence is quoted. Then the partial quote becomes a part of the main sentence and the he said generally becomes part of the main sentence as well:**

Example: He said our country “should use more of its vast reserves of coal.”

He said in these sentences is not an introduction, interruption or an extension and is not set off with commas.

Note: Students are imaginative and resourceful enough to think of appropriate “he said” expressions for the quotes they use. Here are a few examples:

he said,
Obama noted,
she indicated,
they acknowledged,
the senator emphasized,
John exclaimed,
*the student protested,
he quickly explained,
*she vehemently complained,

Obama, after much deliberation, said,
The prisoner who had been apprehended protested,
Tony Judt, a famous Harvard professor of
European history, in a recent article on the UN said,
(he said expressions are not always short; in the
first reference to a source, the complete name
should be used along with necessary identifying
material, the title of the source should be given
and other relevant material is often used)

*Some verbs, like protested and complained, at times make complete statements without additional material and are followed by colons:

Example: He said, “The United States . . .” [he said what?] [something is needed]
He protested: “The United States . . .” [**he protested:**] [**what is not needed**]

Note: **He protested, “The United States . . .”** [**He protested** is an introduction and the quote is the main part of the sentence]

He protested: “The United States . . .” [**He protested** is the main part of the sentence and the quote is an extension]

These interpretations are the only ones possible in view of the punctuation practices that have evolved concerning quotes. They explain the use of the comma after protested—to set off the introduction; they explain the use of the colon after protested—before an extension.

Hyphens are used for two purposes: to create compound words and to separate words at the end of a line. Most errors in the use of hyphen seem to occur in these three situations:

- 1. Be careful to divide words between syllables when they must be split at the end of a line. Use a dictionary to identify syllables when you are not sure how a word should be divided.**
- 2. Do not use hyphens [-] where a dash [—] is needed. In longhand, be sure dashes are twice as long as hyphens.**

3. **Do not fail to hyphenate common compound nouns: twenty-one, father-in-law. Be careful, too, to hyphenate compound adjectives that are generally coined and unusual: military-industrial complex, desk-top blotter. [Note the nouns modified—complex and blotter; awareness of the noun modified can help one spot the compound adjective]**

Apostrophes are used for two purposes: to show possession and to indicate a contraction: the college's placement office (possessive), won't (contraction). Most errors in the use of the apostrophe seem to involve only two situations:

1. **Remember! Its is possessive. This seems contradictory because other short possessives need the apostrophe: the boy's father, the car's windshield. But boy and car are nouns. It is a pronoun and its is the possessive form.**
2. **Remember! Country's is not plural; countries is. A word like country's needs a noun in front of it to modify, not a verb like is. Ex.: The country's armed forces were strong. [armed forces is the necessary noun following the possessive country's]**

KH
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Name _____ Date _____

Practice test B-I

(page 1)

PUNCTUATION MARKS:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Comma | F. Quotation mark |
| B. Semicolon | G. Apostrophe |
| C. Colon | H. Hyphen |
| D. Dash | I. Question mark |
| E. Period | J. Generally no punctuation needed |

Directions: Place the appropriate letter in the blanks on the answer sheet provided on page 81 or on a similar answer sheet.

When space exploration began in the early 1950s(1)two countries, the United States and Russia(2)emerged as competitors. Each wanted to be the first nation to launch an artificial satellite, the first to make a manned orbital flight(3)the first to orbit the moon and the first to land on the moon. As it turned out, Russia led in the early stages of the raced and chalked up three impressive "firsts(4) (5)the first artificial satellite, October 4, 1957; the first manned orbital flight(6)April 12(7)1961(8)the first woman in space(9)June 10(10)1963.

Russia(11)s launching of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I(12) took the United States by surprise. It clearly indicated that Russia had developed more powerful rocket(13)s than the U.S. had(14) it also indicated that Russia had made unusual advancements in it(15)s technological development. In the early 1960s, Russia continued to impress the world with it(16)s space spectaculars. On April 12, 1961, it sent the first man into orbital flight—Yuri Gagarin(17)on June 16, 1963(18) it sent the first woman into orbital flight(19)Valentina Tereshkova. It(20)s clear that the Russians dominated the early years of the space race. "Russia at first had more rocket power(21) (22) one

U.S. space expert lamented. "Russian space technology(23) (24)he added, "was geared for heavier payloads(25) (26)

If Russia was out front in the space race in the late '50s and early '60s(27)the United States, in many ways(28)took the lead in the late '60s. Starting in 1968, it, too(29)began chalking up some impressive "firsts(30) (31) the first lunar orbit, December 21, 1968(32) the first lunar landing, July 16, 1969(33) the first Martian orbit, May 30, 1971.

The most spectacular "first" for the U.S.(34)of course(35)was the lunar landing. Superior space(36)flight planning enabled the U.S. to execute the landing earlier than most space(37)experts expected. Three astronauts(38)Neil Armstrong(39)Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins(40)made the historic flight. Armstrong(41)the first man on the moon(42)made the following now(43)famous statement as he stepped to the moon(44)s surface from the LM(45) "One small step for man; one giant step for mankind!" Later, another astronaut wistfully asked(46) "Is this the extent of man(47)s travel(48)s into space(49) (50)

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Name _____ Date _____

Practice test B-I

(page 2)

USAGE:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Faulty Agreement | E. Faulty Parallelism |
| B. Run-on or Comma Splice | F. Fragment |
| C. Correct | G. Faulty Modification |
| D. Distortion | H. No Clear Pronoun Reference |

Directions: Pick the letter above that most appropriately identifies the error in the sentence. (Each letter is used 2, 3 or 4 times). Use the answer sheet on page 81 or a similar answer sheet.

1. One of the most colorful countries in Europe is Spain, it has everything a tourist could possibly wish for.
2. The country has miles of white sand beaches for swimming, hundreds of mountain slopes for skiing and fishing lakes by the thousands.
3. Vacationers, primarily from Europe and the U.S., enjoys the famous resort areas along the Atlantic Coast.
4. The bathing beaches along the Bay of Biscay the famous resorts enjoy the vacationers.
5. When people first discovered Spain as a vacation land, with 1,400 castles and visit.
6. More than 3,000 years ago, they say the ancient Phoenicians set up colonies on the Spanish coast.
7. Later, the Carthaginians and the Romans, countries that were interested in establishing new colonies, invaded Spain.
8. After the fall of Rome, fierce German tribes swept into Spain from the north, destroyed most of the cities and most of the people were killed.

9. Coming over the mountains from the north, Spain was ravaged by barbarians.
10. After 1200, the Spanish people gradually expelled the Moors.
11. Christopher Columbus landed on the American continent and claimed it for Spain, soldiers and colonists followed him and sent back gold and jewels.
12. Spanish colonies in the new world were established to spread Christianity was the goal of the church.
13. By the 1500s, Spain had become the most powerful country in the world, gold and silver from the new world made Spain the richest country in Europe.
14. During the years that followed, however, wars with England and France brought Spain to the brink of financial disaster.
15. Spain lost most of her colonies the wars were too costly. (not D)
16. Despite advance in industry and technology in the rest of the world.
17. Citizens of Spain are either wealthy or poor are constantly frustrated by high unemployment and poverty.
18. Spain almost needs all the food it can produce for its own people.
19. The colorful bullfights, refined by the Moors, show the love Spanish people have for a spectacle that combines courage and elaborate ceremony.
20. Most of the people live in the coastal regions, a mild climate throughout the year.
21. Spain's leaders said last year they needed more exports.
22. When Spain sought to establish a democracy, a civil war that brought Franco to power for forty years. (not D)
23. Castille is a region famous for bullfights, for dances with castanets and most of the peasants play guitars.
24. A Spaniard, especially one from a remote area, is very proud of their musical heritage.
25. Because of changes in the Spanish government, they say Spain should remain a stable democracy in the decades after Franco's reign.

Name _____ Date _____

Practice test B-I

(page 3)

USAGE (WORDS):

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Wrong Homonym [hom] [words
Have same or nearly same
Pronunciation] | E. Superfluous [Sup]
[unnecessary repetition of
ideas or information] |
| B. Trite expression [Tri]
[clichés] | F. Unidiomatic Expression [idi] |
| C. Correct | G. Grammatical Error [Gra]
[wrong pronoun, adjective, adverb,
verb, etc; double negatives, prep-
ositions, etc; lack of agreement, etc.] |
| D. Redundant [red] [unnecessary
Repetition of the same word/
words] | H. Inappropriate Expression [ina]
[weak words, slang, jargon
substandard words, etc.] |

Directions: Pick the letter above that most appropriately identifies the error in the sentence.
(Each letter is used 2, 3 or 4 times). Use the answer sheet on page 81 or a similar answer sheet.

1. Africa is a splendid country with a tremendous future.
2. Burundi, it is true, has very poor people in it's cities. (not G)
3. Africa is a continent that has more natural resources than any other continent.
4. African whites are generally gentlemen farmers, even though labor shortages have forced them too do much of their own work. (not G)
5. The accompanying music sounds oddly to a trained musician.
6. Much of the industry in the Malagasy Republic is socialistic and government owned.
7. Some African governments have had a difficult time making there governments work.
8. Abundant natural resources could make Africa a leading indus-trial area of the world. Abundant natural resources have cre-ated some problems in Africa.

9. African nations are faced with racial strife and problems arising from differences between blacks and whites.
10. Zambia's economy has for several years been depressed by a very low growth rate.
11. For many of the new nations in Africa, self-government provided a rude awakening to international responsibilities.
12. Less people in Africa include red meat in their diet than in Europe or the United States.
13. In the next ten years, Africa will in the future be basically and primarily interested in developing its natural resources and mineral wealth.
14. Agriculture in Africa is different than farming in Europe or the United States.
15. Reevaluation of the U.S. dollar gave the economies of most African nationals a shot in the arm.
16. Egypt is an African nation that is extremely proud of their history.
17. In recent years, nationalism has begun to rear its ugly head in most of Africa.
18. Somalia is spending millions of dollars and a lot of money to start new industries.
19. The major problem in Africa is the problem of racial strife.
20. The Cameroon, formerly called the French Cameroon, has a great number of small farmers.
21. In some emerging African nations, socialism is spreading like wildfire.
22. Not so long ago, Africa was called the Dark Continent because much of it was unknown to Europeans.
23. The professor witnessed the signing of the treaty in Paris and seen the document years later in a museum.
24. The Belgian Congo is now called Zaire. The Belgian Congo is one of the richest nations in Africa.
25. Guinea is a great country with a terrific habitat for wild animals.

Name _____
Date _____

Test No. _____ Score _____
(For Practice Test B I)

Page 1	Page 2	Page 3
1. _____ 26. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____ 27. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____ 28. _____	3. _____	3. _____
4. _____ 29. _____	4. _____	4. _____
5. _____ 30. _____	5. _____	5. _____
6. _____ 31. _____	6. _____	6. _____
7. _____ 32. _____	7. _____	7. _____
8. _____ 33. _____	8. _____	8. _____
9. _____ 34. _____	9. _____	9. _____
10. _____ 35. _____	10. _____	10. _____
11. _____ 36. _____	11. _____	11. _____
12. _____ 37. _____	12. _____	12. _____
13. _____ 38. _____	13. _____	13. _____
14. _____ 39. _____	14. _____	14. _____
15. _____ 40. _____	15. _____	15. _____
16. _____ 41. _____	16. _____	16. _____
17. _____ 42. _____	17. _____	17. _____
18. _____ 43. _____	18. _____	18. _____
19. _____ 44. _____	19. _____	19. _____
20. _____ 45. _____	20. _____	20. _____
21. _____ 46. _____	21. _____	21. _____
22. _____ 47. _____	22. _____	22. _____
23. _____ 48. _____	23. _____	23. _____
24. _____ 49. _____	24. _____	24. _____
25. _____ 50. _____	25. _____	25. _____