

Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Commas and Apostrophes



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



Teacher's Pet Publications

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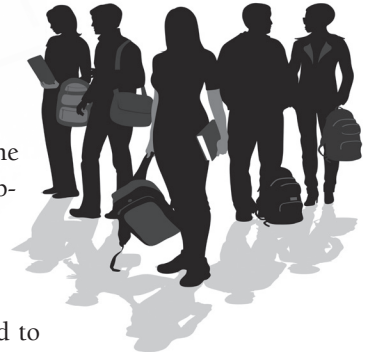
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: *COMMAS AND APOSTROPHES* is designed to help students master the skill of using commas and apostrophes correctly. These two punctuation marks are probably the most widely misused, and they are misused by writers of all ages.

The daily lessons and exercises in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes* are carefully designed to build upon each other. Rather than overwhelming students with a list of rules, the lessons introduce rules and concepts a few at a time, and in an order designed to build understanding. Individual and group activities help reinforce the concepts.

Throughout the guide, various grammatical terms are introduced to students, terms like “appositives” and “parenthetical expressions.” It is important for them to remember that learning these terms shouldn’t become the goal. It is perfectly permissible to know how to punctuate an appositive correctly without necessarily knowing it is called an appositive.

Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes covers all of the most common rules for using commas and apostrophes, and it introduces some of the more uncommon ones. It does not, however, try to cover every obscure possibility that might come up in writing. Supplying rules for every eventuality is likely to only confuse students and is beyond the scope of this ten-day Unit.

The quizzes are designed to be used within each lesson, but can easily be converted into a homework assignment if time proves too short to include it in the day’s work. Day #8, for example, has more exercises than usual because, while there are many distinct rules for apostrophes and a great deal of confusion surrounding them, the best way to learn apostrophes is to actually use them.

Some daily units include more exercises that most classes will be able to cover. The exercises can, therefore, be assigned as homework, extra credit, assignments for specific students who need extra help, etc.

Quizzes, reviews, exercises, and answer keys are all on separate pages, which allows you to copy and distribute the work. If you find yourself with some time remaining at the end of either portion of the guide, use one of the extra tests we have supplied.

Finally, *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes* keeps writing in mind. It isn’t enough for students to be able to plunk commas and apostrophes into ready-made sentences. They need to be able to transfer rules they learn to their own writing. The exercises in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Commas and Apostrophes* involve students in writing and manipulating sentences, helping them to build their skills.

The packet contents, at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students see how various elements can be added before a main clause and should be followed by a comma.
3. Helping students see how certain material can interrupt a main clause and should be set off with commas.
4. Helping students learn how to use commas in a series, in compound sentences, and with two or more adjectives that precede a noun.
5. Helping students learn how to use commas to separate the parts of a date, to separate the parts of an address, to separate a quotation from the rest of a sentence, and to show a contrasting element in a sentence.
6. Reviewing comma rules with a writing exercise that has students use all ten rules in a news story.
7. Helping students understand how to use apostrophes with contractions and with singular possessives and plural possessives that already end in “s.”
8. Helping students learn how to use apostrophes with plural possessives that do not end in “s.”
9. Helping students learn how to use apostrophes for compound possessives and plural letters of the alphabet and reviewing all comma and apostrophe rules.
10. Final test.

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to recognize whether commas and apostrophes are used correctly.
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days.
- To help students understand the importance of learning to punctuate correctly.

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest on Commas and Apostrophes.
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, present a brief overview of what will happen during the next ten days: Students will be learning how to use commas and apostrophes correctly. They will study the punctuation rules involved, learn to correct errors they see, and write sentences of their own that are correctly punctuated. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.
3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

Have students actually try to decipher the paragraph that does not adhere to any conventional capitalization, punctuation, or spelling rules. Because it's not an easy task, the exercise makes an important point about how writing rules and standards are meant to make communication easier. This is a very interesting, but difficult exercise. Once the basic concept—an advertisement for ZZLoops—is understood, deciphering the paragraph can be a fun game when done aloud as a class.

DAY #1: Pretest I

Directions: For each item below, place a “C” in the blank if commas have been used correctly. Place an “I” in the blank if any comma has been used incorrectly or if a comma is missing.

1. ____ No one understood what Tremaine, the most popular boy in school, was doing at a polka party.
2. ____ Esperanza really wanted a new electric guitar the kind that she had played at a store in New York City.
3. ____ Yolanda looked out her window and saw something very strange on the sidewalk but she didn't want to believe that a coyote could be walking calmly down a city street.
4. ____ Mr. Dewhirst accidentally wrote down 428 Ferguson Boulevard, Cloud Haven New Mexico as his address.
5. ____ We had milk a sandwich potato chips and an ice cream sundae for desert.
6. ____ The game show contestant found a box of paper clips behind Door #3 not the suitcase full of money that he had hoped to find.
7. ____ When the gymnast received perfect scores at the end of her routine audience members rose to their feet and cheered wildly.
8. ____ The instructions Pietra found in the box made no sense at all to her, but she tried to put the shelves together; she used screws, bolts, nails, and a lot of duct tape.
9. ____ In my opinion teenagers should not be allowed to drink carbonated beverages or coffee.
10. ____ “Joseph if you don't stop kicking the pew in front of you, the lady there is going to turn around and smack you with her hat” said Mrs. Rivera.
11. ____ We all went to the theater bought some popcorn took our seats and waited for the movie to start.
12. ____ The homely unwanted Gila monster sat forlornly in its cage at the pet store.

DAY #1: Pretest I • Answer Key

1. C CORRECT
2. I Esperanza really wanted a new electric guitar, the kind that she had played at a store in New York City.
3. C CORRECT
4. I Mr. Dewhirst accidentally wrote down 428 Ferguson Boulevard, Cloud Haven, New Mexico, as his address.
5. C CORRECT
6. C CORRECT
7. I When the gymnast received perfect scores at the end of her routine, audience members rose to their feet and cheered wildly.
8. I The instructions Pietra found in the box made no sense at all to her, but she tried to put the shelves together; she used screws, bolts, nails, and a lot of duct tape.
9. I In my opinion, teenagers should not be allowed to drink carbonated beverages or coffee.
10. I “Joseph, if you don’t stop kicking the pew in front of you, the lady there is going to turn around and smack you with her hat,” said Mrs. Rivera.
11. I We all went to the theater, bought some popcorn, took our seats, and waited for the movie to start.
12. I The homely, unwanted Gila monster sat forlornly in its cage at the pet store.

DAY # 1: Pretest II

Directions: For each item below, place a “C” in the blank if apostrophes have been used correctly. Place an “I” in the blank if any apostrophe has been used incorrectly or if an apostrophe is missing.

1. ____ The principal was stunned to find that all the teacher’s desks were missing from the building.
2. ____ Neither Priscilla nor her sister like’s pink lipstick, pink dresses or pink anything.
3. ____ The bedroom that’s done all in black is their’s.
4. ____ The mens’ department is, not surprisingly, next to the womens’ department.
5. ____ “Its time for your pill,” said the nurse sternly. She knew that Blake’s attitude was not the most positive one at the rehab center.
6. ____ Everyone’s ideas will be considered, but only the president’s ideas will go into effect.
7. ____ There are three i’s in the word “infinite.”
8. ____ Whos going to star in “Godzillas Baby Brother”?
9. ____ The calendars missing the month of August.
10. ____ Norville Whitman’s ugly portrait was part of the Whitman family’s estate.
11. ____ The fox’es dens are about a mile apart.
12. ____ Roberta Williams TV show is a huge hit with grandmother’s.

DAY #1: Pretest II • Answer Key

1. I The principal was stunned to find that all the teachers' desks were missing from the building.
2. I Neither Priscilla nor her sister likes pink lipstick, pink dresses, or pink anything.
3. I The bedroom that's done all in black is theirs.
4. I The men's department is, not surprisingly, next to the women's department.
5. I "It's time for your pill," said the nurse sternly. She knew that Blake's attitude was not the most positive one at the rehab center.
6. C CORRECT
7. C CORRECT
8. I Who's going to star in "Godzilla's Baby Brother"?
9. I The calendar's missing the month of August.
10. I Norville Whitman's ugly portrait was part of the Whitman family's estate.
11. I The foxes' dens are about a mile apart.
12. I Roberta Williams's TV show is a huge hit with grandmothers.

DAY #1: Pretest III

Directions: Rewrite the sentences so that all commas and apostrophes are correct. All sentences have more than one error in them.

1. Myrons puppy was born on December 15 2010 at the veterinary clinic at 263 Adamson Street Feldspere Kansas during a tornado.

2. Delmont agreed to try the roasted crickets and fried ants at the food fair. However he would not try his mothers roasted eggplant fried peppers or boiled carrots at home.

3. Anya looked over at the handsome policeman the one who was giving her a ticket and she suddenly didnt care about the \$75 fine. She thought the policemans badge reflected his brown eyes very nicely.

4. Hugh wanted to finish the test as soon as possible and he wanted to pass it with flying colors. His familys future depended on it.

5. "You have'nt completed one assignment this entire week" said Mr. Harrison Tonis math teacher.

6. In fact the entire school districts budget is used up by the need to rebuild the three schools' wrecked in the hurricane.

DAY #1: Pretest III • Answer Key

1. Myron's puppy was born on December 15, 2010, at the veterinary clinic at 263 Adamson Street, Feldspere, Kansas, during a tornado.
2. Delmont agreed to try the roasted crickets and fried ants at the food fair. However, he would not try his mother's roasted eggplant, fried peppers, or boiled carrots at home.
3. Anya looked over at the handsome policeman, the one who was giving her a ticket, and she suddenly didn't care about the \$75 fine. She thought the policeman's badge reflected his brown eyes very nicely.
4. Hugh wanted to finish the test as soon as possible, and he wanted to pass it with flying colors. His family's future depended on it.
5. "You haven't completed one assignment this entire week," said Mr. Harrison, Toni's math teacher.
6. In fact, the entire school district's budget is used up by the need to rebuild the three schools wrecked in the hurricane.

DAY # 1: Lesson

Why Do We Have To Learn This Stuff?

Many students wonder why they have to learn about correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuation—especially in this era of text messaging. After all, many people ignore all three aspects of grammar and manage to communicate with their friends.

It's true. Friends who know each other well can manage to decipher even very strange messages. Even people who aren't friends can usually figure out a text message that is short, but full of errors.

On the other hand, imagine a world where all capitalization, spelling, and punctuation rules were not important, and “anything goes” applied to all forms of communication.

Imagine, for example, that you encountered a website with page after page of information like this:

*Enywo'nwho wontctaluk gr8 shud tri! R gnu brasslut' four both men&-women zzloopsarmad from gen youine letherinter lass-
dwith kulurfulbedsan dezinedto enhance anyoutFit ewekan where them fourany ok azhun whethurcassss ual orr forMul buzzri-
zuto staruvthupopp "youllar" teevee show stranjur frum satt earn sez zzloopsr SEW kuli half wonfour evERee owtfitione gade
chenowith whooo is star'ring in thehitt mOv'ie oshunz o nfire beeeveez that zzloops helpedher "BEEcome" a suc CES ial ways
woa!re zzloopstwomy A udishunz &Iwuz sucSfullevry'tim she sed thEymadme lo!k gud themostpopYou larkulurz inhourlineR
egplantt mellonebonyandflame redif YOU ordur inthuneXt48 ourz weull ssEndyou Urfrist zzloopsbrasletz 415\$ asavengsuv
OvEr*10pursent ordurtoodae*

How much of the message can you decipher?

It's so much easier to read the same information on the same website when it has correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuation:

Anyone who wants to look great should try our new bracelets for both men and women. ZZ Loops are made from genuine leather interlaced with colorful beads and designed to enhance any outfit. You can wear them for any occasion, whether casual or formal.

Buzz Rizzuto, star of the popular TV show Stranger from Saturn says, "ZZ Loops are so cool! I have one for every outfit I own." Jade Chenowith, who is starring in the hit movie Oceans on Fire, believes that ZZ Loops helped her become a success. "I always wore ZZ Loops to my auditions, and I was successful every time," she said. "They made me look good."

The most popular colors in our line are eggplant, melon, ebony, and flame red. If you order in the next 48 hours, we'll send you your first ZZ Loops bracelet for \$15.00, a savings of over 10%. Order today!

Capitalization, spelling, and punctuation rules have developed over the years as a way to make communication easier. When people learn the same rules and guidelines, everyone benefits—just as we benefit from having driving rules and regulations. Imagine the chaos that would result if people could drive any direction, in any lane, and at any speed on our roads and highways. Traffic would be a mess, and accidents would occur even more often than they do now.

Over the next ten days, you are going to be studying two punctuation marks: commas and apostrophes. Learning to use both correctly is really not difficult. If you take time to learn when and how to use both, using them correctly will soon become second nature to you.

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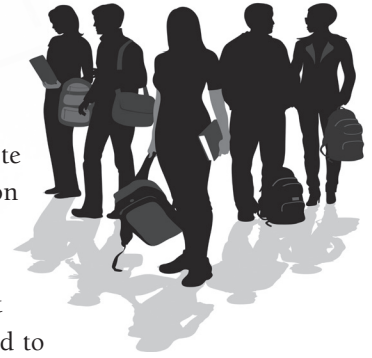
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ONS is designed to help students differentiate between run-on sentences and fragments. These two errors are among the most common problems in writing, and they are found in writers of all ages.

The daily lessons and exercises in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Fragments and Run-ons* are carefully designed to build upon each other. Rather than overwhelming students with a list of rules, the lessons introduce rules and concepts a few at a time, and in an order designed to build understanding. Individual and group activities help reinforce the concepts.

Many students are often baffled and turned off when lessons begin with a great deal of grammatical terminology. Therefore, terminology is used sparingly and woven in over the course of the lessons. Some familiarity with subjects, predicates, punctuation, parts of speech, etc., is assumed. The purpose of the packet is to help students write complete, correctly punctuated sentences—not to memorize terms.

Many students don't really see the difference between a fragment, a sentence, and a run-on. *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Fragments and Run-ons* covers the most-common errors that students will make, and it introduces some of the more uncommon ones. It does not, however, try to cover every obscure possibility that might come up in writing. Supplying rules for every eventuality is likely to only confuse students and is beyond the scope of this ten-day Unit.

The quizzes are designed to be used within each lesson, but can easily be converted into homework assignments if time proves too short to include it in the day's work. In addition, some daily units include more exercises that most classes will be able to cover. The exercises can, therefore, be assigned as homework, extra credit, assignments for specific students who need extra help, etc.

Quizzes, reviews, exercises, and answer keys are all on separate pages, which allows you to copy and distribute the work. If you find yourself with some time remaining at the end of either portion of the guide, use one of the extra tests we have supplied.

Finally, *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Fragments and Run-ons* keeps writing in mind. The exercises involve students in writing and manipulating sentences, helping them to build their skills, confidently recognize and correct fragments and run-ons, and write complete, correctly punctuated sentences of their own. The varied exercises help students see the power and flexibility of the English language.

The packet contents, at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students hear the difference between a fragment and a sentence
3. Helping students recognize three common kinds of fragments and understand how to fix them
4. Helping students understand that dependent clauses are fragments if not accompanied by an independent clause
5. Helping students understand how “ing” words often play a role in sentence fragments
6. Review game
7. Introducing myths about run-on sentences and helping students learn that a comma alone cannot separate two independent clauses
8. Helping students understand how to use a semicolon to correct a run-on and helping them understand when very long sentences are not run-ons
9. Reviewing fragments and run-ons
10. Final Test

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to recognize complete sentences, fragments, and run-ons.
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days.
- To help students understand the importance of writing well.

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest: “Fragments, Sentences, and Run-ons.”
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, explain that even fairly experienced writers sometimes accidentally write fragments or run-ons—two of the most common problems in writing.

Give a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will be learning how to recognize and correct sentence fragments and run-on sentences. In the process, they will be polishing their ability to write complete sentences. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.

3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.
4. **Test review.** If time allows, you may want to quickly go over the correct answers to the pretest, projecting the test for all to see. The test should take approximately 25 minutes, allowing you time to go over it by having student score another student’s test. Remind classes that they will want to keep these tests to see their improvement in two weeks on the post-test.
5. **Assessment.** Grade the pretests. Did students score higher than you thought they would? If so, you might want to complete this unit in fewer than ten days. Did they do poorly on the test, as a group? If so, you will likely want to complete all ten days of lessons. One of the benefits of Fragments and Run-ons is that students aren’t just learning about fragments and run-ons. They are improving their ability to write varied, complete sentences in many patterns. By encouraging creativity and a bit of fun with some of the sentence-writing activities, more advanced students can stretch themselves while slower students get the practice they need.

DAY # 1: Pretest

Fragments, Sentences, and Run-ons

Directions: The items below include complete sentences, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. If any part of an item is a sentence fragment, it is incorrect. Place an “F” beside it. If an item includes a run-on sentence, it is also incorrect. Place an “R” beside it. If an item contains only complete sentences (no fragments or run-ons), it is correct. Place an “S” beside it.

1. ____ Damion really thought his father was going to buy him a Lexus for graduation, his father was thinking more along the lines of a new suitcase.
2. ____ The next time Isabel babysits for the people in the next apartment.
3. ____ Unfortunately, Mr. Geppinger didn't listen to advice not to feed the bears in Yellowstone National Park.
4. ____ Although Nadia knew it was a good idea to be polite whenever her grandmother came to visit.
5. ____ Dion was not exactly looking forward to the weekend. Because he knew it was going to involve cleaning the garage.
6. ____ Do bee stings hurt?
7. ____ After Olivia heard the strange noise in the middle of the night, she looked out the window and saw something large and hairy lumbering toward the back door. It did not look friendly.
8. ____ When Ayana decided to make homemade sausage and mushroom pizza and serve it to the friends she had invited over on Friday night.
9. ____ Kimani really loves to read. Which is why she has checked out 23 books.
10. ____ Sherilyn and her sister both entered the bike race; they both hoped to win.
11. ____ Sophia refused to go barefoot in the house the carpet was absolutely filthy.
12. ____ Roofs blown off houses, cars lifted up and tossed miles away, total destruction of the town.
13. ____ By studying the other actors in the play carefully to see how they managed to learn so much dialogue in such a short time.
14. ____ Faisal went to the concert alone, his girlfriend was grounded.
15. ____ The temperature in the city remained at well over 100 degrees for five days, and some people without air-conditioning coped by placing blocks of ice in front of portable fans.
16. ____ The dog wearing the cute little pink booties.

17. ____ Some people love chocolate. Some people don't.
18. ____ The woman standing on the bed of the flatbed truck in the middle of the parade.
19. ____ The man yawning and sighing repeatedly during the speech by the candidate for mayor, who was clearly becoming annoyed.
20. ____ Butch chose "C" for all of the items on the multiple-choice test. Hoping that some of the items would be correct.

Directions: Correct the following sentences and run-ons in the space provided, adding your own words as necessary, or removing words. If you can fix an item by crossing something out or simply adding a punctuation mark, you do not need to write the sentence over.

21. When Jeremy saw what was behind the door.

22. The kids were noisy, the parents were exhausted.

23. Amanda was really sick of reading books about vampires she wondered why all her friends still seemed to love them.

24. A number of ten-dollar bills wrapped in an old plaid handkerchief and stuffed into a crack in the wall of the attic bedroom.

25. Slipping away from the parade because he just didn't like marching bands and floats.

DAY # 1: Lesson

“Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”

There are many, many answers to the question, “How come we have to learn this stuff?” Here’s just one answer, for today: It will help you become a competent writer.

Why do you need to become a competent writer? There is a great likelihood that writing well is a skill you will need as an adult.

Many of you may be thinking to yourself, “But I know I’m not going to need to write well, not with what I want to do.”

How do you know? Do you know everything about your future? When you were younger, did you know how you would be right now? Have you known everything about your future up to this time? The truth is that a huge number of the jobs available today involve writing. In fact, one study reported that two-thirds of salaried workers in large U.S. companies have jobs that require writing.* Two-thirds!

According to the same study, U.S. employers complain that a third of workers don’t meet the writing requirements needed for their positions. If you are not competent as a writer, that lack of ability can definitely hold you back.

Yes, it is true that many people do just fine in life without being able to write well. Many more, however, find themselves handicapped. You can’t foresee the future. The more skills you have under your belt, the brighter your future is likely to be. Being able to write clearly and accurately is a fundamental tool that will give you more choices in life and might also earn you more money, no matter what job you have.

* the College Board’s National Commission on Writing

DAY #2: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To introduce students to the idea that they can probably learn to recognize sentence fragments by hearing them.
- To help students see that they likely know a lot already about how to correct sentence fragments, even if they don't understand the process in grammatical terms.

Activities:

1. **Lesson.** Present the lesson: “The Truth About Sentence Fragments.” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.
2. **Practice.** Work with the class as a whole to correct the three sentence fragments in “Exercise A” orally. Call on various students, and encourage the class to think creatively to come up with different ways to correct the fragments. They should correct each fragment in at least three different ways.

Have students complete “Exercise B” individually. Collect their work, and then have students share possible answers.

DAY #2: Lesson

The Truth About Sentence Fragments

If you are like most students, you have probably heard English teachers complaining about sentence fragments. Teachers hate sentence fragments, at least when they show up on papers.

It's not because sentence fragments are always wrong. The truth is that sentence fragments appear in some of the greatest novels ever written. Sometimes, in fact, a sentence fragment can actually be very effective.

The trick is in knowing what you're doing. You can be sure that great writers know the difference between a sentence fragment and a complete sentence. They are choosing to use a fragment for effect. That's a lot different than using a sentence fragment because you don't recognize one when you see one. It's different from using one because you don't have control over your own writing. Many students have a hard time recognizing sentence fragments and, therefore, they use them accidentally.

So what is a sentence fragment? You probably know that a sentence fragment is a piece of a sentence, an incomplete sentence. But that doesn't mean it's necessarily short. In fact, a sentence fragment can actually be quite long.

Examples:

After the mathematician posted a difficult logic puzzle on his blog and challenged readers all over the world to try to solve it within thirty days.

Many times during the night, throughout the next day, and lasting until supper.

When you get over being angry at the grade you received in the math quiz because you didn't have enough time to study when you got out of the hospital.

You probably know that a sentence fragment is missing something important—a subject or a verb. But that doesn't mean everything with a subject and a verb is a sentence. You may see both in a dependent clause, for example, but a dependent clause is not a sentence.

Examples:

Because she actually bought the Bike herself.

When Dallas saw what had happened to his motorcycle.

You have probably heard that a sentence fragment doesn't express a complete thought. While that is true in one sense, "complete" is pretty hard to define. Many perfectly good sentences express a thought that most of us would not regard as complete at all.

Example:

The face outside the dark window suddenly grew closer, and then we heard a terrible scream.

What happened next? Whose face was it? Who screamed? The example is a complete sentence, even though it is not complete in every sense of the word. "Complete" doesn't mean that the sentence tells you everything there is to know.

Knowing and understanding terms like subjects, verbs, and dependent clauses is helpful. However, you can probably hear the difference between a sentence and a fragment. Listen while students or your teacher reads aloud the following fragments. Then listen to the sentences that relate to each fragment. *NOTE: The following set of examples work best if completed sentences are read after the fragments in order to show the contrast.*

Sentence Fragments

1. Breaking glass.
2. Never seen a vampire.
3. Cats—the most wonderful animals on earth.
4. Although football is your favorite sport.
5. Your friend Google.
6. After my sister got her drivers' license on Monday, backed into the neighbor's trashcans on Tuesday, and drove into the back of the garage on Wednesday, wrecking my dad's tool bench.
7. A many-splendored thing.
8. Our neighbors driving us crazy?
9. The square root of 64.
10. When the big hand is on the 10.
11. Because DelRoy found it very difficult to believe that Ms. Kroonenberg had a heart.
12. Knowing that she was destined to become famous and someday discover a new planet or solar system.

Completed Sentences

1. Glass breaks.
2. I have never seen a vampire.
3. Cats are the most wonderful animals on earth, and everyone should have one.
4. Why is football your favorite sport?
5. Google is your friend.
6. My sister got her drivers' license on Monday, backed into the neighbor's trashcans on Tuesday, and drove into the back of the garage on Wednesday, wrecking my dad's tool bench.
7. Love is a many-splendored thing.
8. Why are our neighbors driving us crazy?
9. Do you know if the square root of 64 is 8?
10. When the big hand is on the 10, Bobbie, you can have your cookie.
11. DelRoy found it very difficult to believe that Ms. Kroonenberg had a heart.
12. Kameko knew that she was destined to become famous, and she was pretty sure it would be for discovering a new planet or solar system some day.

Sentence Fragments and Completed Sentences Questions

1. Compare each item from the fragment column with the item in the sentence column. What changed?

2. In some cases, the subject was left out. Find three examples.

- ---

- ---

- ---

3. In some cases, the verb (predicate) was left out. Find three examples.

- ---

- ---

- ---

4. In some cases, a word was added, turning the sentence into a “dependent clause.” A dependent clause has a subject and a verb, but because of that extra word, more is needed to finish the clause and make it a complete sentence. Joe hiccupped is a sentence. When Joe hiccupped is not. It is dependent on something else to finish it. For example, it could be completed like this: When Joe hiccupped, he woke up his father. Find three sentences that are fragments because of an added word.

- ---

- ---

- ---

Sentence Fragments and Completed Sentences Questions • Answer Key

1. Answers may vary.
2. #2, #7, #12
3. #3, #5, #9
4. #4, #6, #11

DAY #2: Exercise A

Directions: Read these three sentence fragments aloud. They sound unfinished. Think of several ways to turn each into a complete sentence.

1. The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow.

2. Sipping some lemonade.

3. After the house burned down.

DAY #2: Exercise A • Answer Key

1. The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow asked for another on his left elbow.
The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow was astoundingly handsome.
The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow was calmly sipping some lemonade after the house burned down.
2. Sipping some lemonade, Sophia finally started to cool off.
While sipping some lemonade on the front porch, Sophia watched her children play.
3. After the house burned down, the family lost everything.
The fire department checked for arson because they suspected something when the house burned down.

DAY #2: Exercise B

Directions: Correct each sentence fragment below in two different ways.

1. While Rosario pouted.

2. Clapping her hands and screaming with joy.

3. The fluffy white kitten sitting on Anna's doorstep.

4. When they heard the sound of screeching tires.

5. The food in the container at the back of the refrigerator.

Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Modifiers and Pronouns



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



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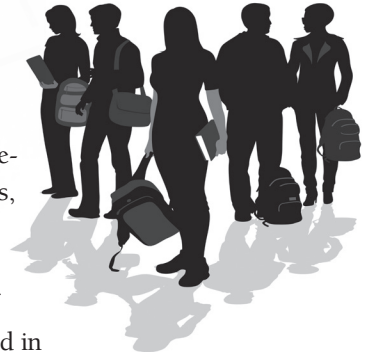
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: MODIFIERS AND PRONOUNS is designed to help students use various descriptors and pronouns correctly. After a review of some basics about adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, students learn how to avoid common errors when using them. The daily lessons are practical, with the focus on actually *using* the modifiers and pronouns properly.

The definitions are important, and there are a few exercises that require an understanding of their functions, but using these parts of speech properly as modifiers is the element that is stressed in the lessons. Subsequent instruction will help students learn specifics about the use of modifiers—choosing the correct form of adjectives for comparison, avoiding over-used modifiers, misplaced modifiers, and dangling modifiers, including those in which the word the modifier is meant to modify is left out entirely.

The concentration is on first helping students get a general sense of modifiers and the roles they can play. Students also learn how well-chosen modifiers can add color and life to their writing.

The first lesson on pronouns helps students understand the function of pronouns and then guides them in learning the difference between subjective and objective case. Lessons and activities then give students tips and tools for knowing which case is appropriate in common constructions.

The pronoun section also addresses a number of common mistakes in pronoun usage, such as unnecessary pronouns in double subjects and unacceptable forms of pronouns.

Of course, a complete understanding of correct pronoun usage is impossible without a thorough knowledge of parts of speech and an ability to analyze and correctly identify how every word in a sentence is being used. Because that is beyond the scope of *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Modifiers and Pronouns*, the lessons give students practical information that will guide them in the right direction for most sentences. It does not attempt to cover every possibility in the complicated world of pronoun case, nor does it try to help students distinguish between kinds of pronouns, such as demonstrative and interrogative. (Pronoun/antecedent agreement is covered in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement*.) The emphasis here is upon using pronouns correctly.

You will find that some “Day” might have more activities or quizzes than you will be able to cover; in this case, you might use them as homework assignments, as review, or as a quick reminder if a subsequent lesson takes less time than anticipated. For example, there are 50 questions in the review activity on Day #9. You should pick which ones you want the class to try to answer, as it’s unlikely that you will be able to deal with each one.

The packet contents at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students understand the role adjectives and adverbs play—both as single words and as clauses and phrases.
3. Giving students practical tips for using effective modifiers and guiding them in practice using modifiers in different ways.
4. Helping students learn the difference between the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and understanding when to use each.
5. Helping students recognize and correct sentences with dangling or misplaced modifiers.
6. Helping students understand the role pronouns play in our language and introducing subjective and objective case pronouns.
7. Having students learn when to use subjective case and when to use objective case pronouns.
8. Helping students learn to avoid some common errors in pronoun usage.
9. Reviewing and reinforcing the correct uses of modifiers and pronouns.
10. Final test on modifiers and pronouns.

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to use modifiers and pronouns correctly
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days
- To help students understand the importance of using correct grammar

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest “Modifiers and Pronouns.”
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, present a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will be learning some basics about modifiers and pronouns. They will learn that modifiers can be single words (adjectives or adverbs) or groups of words (adjective and adverb phrases and clauses), and they will learn how to use both to improve their writing and avoid common pitfalls, such as dangling or misplaced modifiers. They will also learn how to choose correct pronoun case and avoid some common mistakes in choosing pronouns. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.
3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

If time allows, have students try to spot the errors in “Job Application Goofs.”

DAY #1: Pretest

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section A

Directions: Some of the following sentences are unclear because of misplaced or dangling modifiers. Some of the sentences are correct. Place an “I” before each incorrect sentence. Place a “C” before each sentence that is correct.

1. ____ Wearing a gorgeous red satin gown, Chuck couldn't take his eyes off his prom date.
2. ____ I passed a hot dog to my friend that I stabbed with a fork.
3. ____ Glancing at the price of the purse that she loved, Monique knew that she was probably shopping at the wrong store.
4. ____ Yesterday, I saw a raccoon sorting through the recyclable materials.
5. ____ Driving through Nebraska, corn seemed to be growing everywhere.
6. ____ While sliding into third base, Kareem didn't even feel the pain in his right knee.
7. ____ Mr. Torres explained to his son that the black and white “squirrel” was really a skunk.
8. ____ Mr. Reynolds showed the lawnmower to his daughter that he had just bought at the discount store.
9. ____ Boiling on the stove, Ming forgot all about the eggs until they boiled dry and exploded.
10. ____ When looking for a pet, the animal's needs are important to consider.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section B

Directions: Each of the following sentences is unclear because of a misplaced or dangling modifier. Rewrite each sentence so that the meaning is clear.

11. The stranger talked nonstop, describing the details of her wedding in the elevator.

12. Hopping briskly through the vegetable garden, Mr. Jenson saw a rabbit.

13. We saw a number of kangaroos on vacation in Australia.

14. Don't do any painting until completely mixed.

15. After laying an egg that weighed almost two pounds, the farmer showed off his prize-winning ostrich.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section C

Directions: Some of the sentences below use adjectives or pronouns incorrectly. Place an "I" before each sentence that contains an error. Place a "C" beside each sentence that is correct.

16. ____ Of all the animals on the farm, the baby ducks were by far the cuter.

17. ____ Their house is coldest than ours.

18. ____ Me and Alfred won first place at the science fair for our project involving drain cleaner and dental floss.

19. ____ My mother was not thrilled when Grandma bought a puppy for Nadya and I.

20. ____ My uncle and me didn't even know each other.

21. ____ Blake was definitely more better than me at English.

22. ____ Him and me are going to sneak away to the concert as soon as it is dark.

23. ____ My friend Julio, he just won a scholarship to Yale.

24. ____ Shara was more prettier than anyone on the planet, in Hector's opinion.

25. ____ Looking at the Tigers and the Lions closely, the coach decided that the Tigers were the more aggressive team.

26. ____ Katharine and myself have plans to tour Italy as soon as we graduate from high school.

27. ____ Between you and me, I really don't like spending money on coffee drinks.

28. ____ Mr. Evans hisself told me that he didn't like the idea of his daughter going out with Benjamin.

29. ____ Nobody told us kids that school had been cancelled.

30. ____ I voted for Ed instead of Fred in the election. I think Ed is the more qualified candidate.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section D

Directions: Use each of the following phrases correctly in a sentence.

31. she and I

32. Chrissie and her

33. he and she

34. my friends and I

35. my friends and me

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section E

Directions: For each item below, underline the correct pronoun in parentheses.

36. (Her, She) and I are afraid we are never going to find summer jobs.

37. Shane and Al are picking up (her, she) and him after work.

38. Between you and (I, me), I think Ethan might still believe in the tooth fairy.

39. The speaker introduced the professor and (myself, me).

40. (They, Them) and I are definitely going to be in the final round of the tournament.

DAY # 1: Pretest • Answer Key

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section A

1. I
2. I
3. C
4. I
5. I
6. C
7. C
8. I
9. I
10. I

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section B

11. The stranger in the elevator talked nonstop, describing the details of her wedding.
12. Mr. Jenson saw a rabbit hopping briskly through the vegetable garden.
13. While on vacation in Australia, we saw a number of kangaroos.
14. Don't do any painting until the colors are completely mixed.
15. The farmer showed off his prize-winning ostrich after it laid an egg that weighed almost two pounds.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section C

16. I
17. I
18. I
19. I
20. I
21. I
22. I
23. I
24. I
25. C
26. I
27. C
28. I
29. C
30. C

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section D

31. She and I are afraid we are never going to find summer jobs.
32. Shane and Al are picking up Chrissie and her.
33. Only he and she finished the climb.
34. My friends and I will arrive soon.
35. Send the invitation to my friends and me.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section E

36. She and I are afraid we are never going to find summer jobs.
37. Shane and Al are picking up her and him after work.
38. Between you and me, I think Ethan might still believe in the tooth fairy.
39. The speaker introduced the professor and me.
40. They and I are definitely going to be in the final round of the tournament.

DAY # 1: Lesson

Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?

Students often wonder why they have to bother to learn grammar.

Examples:

“It’s so picky,” they say.

“It doesn’t make sense.”

“Who cares?”

“I’m never going to need this stuff.”

The truth is, you already know a lot about grammar—a *lot*. You put together words according to an amazingly complex system of rules, and you do it without even thinking about it. It doesn’t matter what language you speak. All speakers understand a lot of grammar.

For example, if you speak English, you know that this is not a proper English sentence:

Delicious the smelled soup.

Without necessarily *knowing* that you know, you understand that the word “the” indicates that a noun is coming up. You know that in a short sentence like this, the verb is likely to follow the subject, not precede it. You know that, in order to be grammatical, the sentence needs to be rearranged like this:

The soup smelled delicious.

You also understand that the sentence would be wrong if it were:

The delicious soup smelled.

You probably also know that this sentence is incorrect:

The soup created by the chef on the stove was simmering.

You know that “on the stove” is in the wrong place, making it sound like the chef is on top of a hot stove. You also can probably fix the sentence in a flash:

The soup created by the chef was simmering on the stove. - OR - The soup simmering on the stove was created by the chef.

So if you know so much about grammar, why do you have to learn even more?

Imagine for a moment that you are learning to drive a car for the first time. Without even thinking about it, you probably know where the key goes. You know what the steering wheel is for. Because you have grown up seeing people drive cars, you probably know even more—where the brake is, where the turn signal is, where the lights are, how to turn on the radio. That doesn't mean you know everything there is about driving a car. It doesn't mean that you know the rules of the road. It doesn't mean you know what to do when the engine light turns red, how to use the jack to change a flat tire, or what to do when you see a flashing yellow light ahead. Your knowledge needs to be fine-tuned.

Similarly, English speakers need to fine-tune their knowledge of the language. A grammar error might not be as serious as some driving errors, such as driving on the wrong side of the road. However, there are many circumstances in which showing that you don't know the rules can make you appear lacking in knowledge, intelligence, or education. It may not be *true* that you are lacking, but that will be the perception.

If you know the “rules of the road” when it comes to grammar, you have a lot more power. You can use language to say exactly what you want to say in *all* circumstances.

DAY # 1: Exercise

How Sharp is your English?

Directions: The sentences below are from job interviews and job applications. Eight of the sentences contain errors that might hurt a job applicant. Write “I” for incorrect before the sentences that contain errors in pronouns or modifiers, rewrite them, and put “C” for correct and then correct before sentences without errors.

1. ____ I will call for an interview on Friday, and I hope to talk to you if your in your office.

2. ____ Another girl and I volunteered at a Veterinarian’s Office. Me and her greeted all the people coming into the busy reception area.

3. ____ I do have some experience with children. I have worked as a babysitter for neighbors and also as a volunteer at a local preschool.

4. ____ My friends mentioned that I should apply here for this job. She worked for you as a receptionist for over a year.

5. ____ My work experience are varied.

6. ____ I am either applying for the position of secretary or receptionist.

7. ____ I am enclosing three letters of recommendation, which they should be enough.

8. ____ I have looked into your business that interests me and I am sending you this application.

9. ____ I am applying for a position as an intern. I have included a copy of my high school transcript, as well as list of the summer jobs I have had in the past three years.

10. ____ I saw your ad for a construction worker in the newspaper.

DAY #1: Exercise • Answer Key

How Sharp is your English?

1. I I will call for an interview on Friday, and I hope to talk to you if you're in your office.
2. I Another girl and I volunteered at a veterinarian's office. She and I greeted all the people coming into the busy reception area.
3. C CORRECT
4. I My friend mentioned that I should apply here for this job. She worked for your company as a receptionist for over a year.
5. I My work experience is varied.
6. I I am applying for either the position of secretary or of receptionist. Better, obviously, would be for the applicant to declare which job he or she wants.
7. I I am enclosing three letters of recommendation, which should be enough.
8. I Your business interests me, and I am sending you this application.
9. C CORRECT
10. I I saw your ad in the newspaper for a construction worker.

Ten Days to A+ Grammar

**Subject/Verb and Pronoun/
Antecedent Agreement**



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



Teacher's Pet Publications

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Introduction



Ten Days to A+ Grammar: *Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement* helps students learn the basics of subject/verb agreement and also gives them tools to decide which verb to use when sentences are complicated by phrases and clauses, inverted order, compound subjects, etc. It goes on to point out that, just as subjects and verbs must agree in number, pronouns must also agree with their antecedents. After a brief review of antecedents, students learn how to avoid common errors in pronoun/antecedent agreement.

The emphasis is on handling ordinary agreement issues that students are most likely to encounter in their own writing. The lessons are arranged so that agreement issues that are rare or more difficult come at the end of each section. If students are having trouble grasping the basics, a teacher can choose to leave out some or all of these sections.

Teaching agreement has become more difficult in recent years as popular culture has made certain substandard constructions more and more common, “He don’t” or “She be going” sound just fine to many students, and they can be resistant when they feel their own lives and customs are being criticized. The introductory lesson on forms of English attempts to help students understand the relevance of “Standard English,” while still respecting whatever forms of English they use to communicate on a daily basis. Knowing Standard English gives students choices. If they don’t know it, they are often limited in their choices and, therefore, their opportunities in life.

Some daily units include more exercises that most classes will be able to cover. The exercises can, therefore, be assigned as homework, extra credit, assignments for specific students who need extra help, etc.

Quizzes, reviews, exercises, and answer keys are all on separate pages, which allows you to copy and distribute the work.

Both sections of this unit introduce a great deal of material, and the review game on Day #9 helps students digest what they have learned.

The packet contents at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students understand that singular nouns take singular verbs, and plural nouns take plural verbs
3. Helping students understand how to handle compound subjects joined with *and* and compound subjects joined with *or*
4. Helping students understand that certain words are always singular and certain words are always plural
5. Helping students learn how to deal with a number of subject/verb agreement issues that often cause problems, such as collective nouns and sentences in which the subject follows the verb
6. Helping students understand that every pronoun must have a clear antecedent
7. Helping students understand that a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number
8. Helping students understand how to handle some of the more difficult issues involving pronoun/antecedent agreement, including singular antecedents that require gender-neutral pronouns

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- to assess how well students understand subject/verb agreement
- to assess how well students understand pronoun/antecedent agreement
- to give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days
- to help students understand the importance of using correct grammar

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest “Subject/Verb & Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement.”
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, give a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will learn about subject/verb agreement and pronoun/antecedent agreement. They will also learn how to apply the rules to their own writing.
3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

The lesson points out that what we call “proper” or “standard English” is something that has developed over the years to help communication. Knowing how to write and speak according to the rules of Standard English is something expected of those who receive an education in U.S. schools. Students who know the rules can choose to follow them when they want and ignore them when they want. Those who *don't* know the rules limit their opportunities. Students who show openness about language and a respect for the idea that informal English isn't the *only* English will be more receptive to learning.

To reinforce the idea that language differs across the U.S. in many ways, show students the “What Do You Say?” list of words used in various parts of the country. Ask them which terms are ones that they commonly use. Which ones are not? Students might also be interested in investigating differences in terms used by English speakers in England and English speakers in the U.S., using the Internet to find information.

DAY #1: Pretest

Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement • Section A

Directions: Some of the sentences below are correct. Some are incorrect. Put a “C” beside each one that is correct. Put an “I” beside any incorrect sentences.

1. ____ One of the friends are surely going to get tired and drop out.
2. ____ Zola, along with the Ling twins, is collecting donations for the food bank.
3. ____ Coyotes live in many areas of Utah and New Mexico.
4. ____ The instruments in the band needs tuning.
5. ____ Several boys has asked Renata for a date, but she has turned them all down.
6. ____ Beans and onions fill the tortillas when my Aunt Rosa cook.
7. ____ A few of the pieces of pottery is broken.
8. ____ Vanessa or Maya is going to take over.
9. ____ Each of the cooks on the food channel are trying to win the grand prize.
10. ____ Each of those paintings look strange, but the watercolor looks the strangest.
11. ____ There is rolls of toilet paper hanging all over the trees in our front yard.
12. ____ Gordon don't like peas, and he is never going to like peas.
13. ____ “Fifty dollars is too much to pay for a pair of socks,” said Charity, “no matter how cute they are.”
14. ____ The play *Eight Little Soldiers* were being presented at the local theater.
15. ____ Every single boy or girl who ate the fish sticks were sick all night.

Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement • Section B

Directions: Underline the correct word in parentheses and write it in the blank provided.

16. _____ Measles (is, are) very rare now among children in the United States.
17. _____ There (is, are) 24 cans of cat food in that closet.
18. _____ The scissors (is, are) in the top drawer.

19. _____ Neither my computer nor my television (is, are) working tonight.
20. _____ Where (is, are) the pants I put in the closet last week?
21. _____ The cat or the three puppies (is, are) going to be adopted first.
22. _____ Nobody I know from my classes (show, shows) up at the tutoring sessions.
23. _____ The potatoes or the carrot (is, are) going down the disposal first.
24. _____ *The Birds* (is, are) a classic Alfred Hitchcock movie.
25. _____ In Alan's opinion, seventy-five dollars (is, are) a reasonable hourly rate.

DAY # 1: Pretest • Answer Key

Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement • Section A

1. I
2. C
3. C
4. I
5. I
6. I
7. I
8. C
9. I
10. I
11. I
12. I
13. C
14. I
15. I

Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement • Section B

16. Measles is very rare now among children in the United States.
17. There are 24 cans of cat food in that closet.
18. The scissors are in the top drawer.
19. Neither my computer nor my television is working tonight.
20. Where are the pants I put in the closet last week?
21. The cat or the three puppies are going to be adopted first.
22. Nobody I know from my classes shows up at the tutoring sessions.
23. The potatoes or the carrot is going down the disposal first.
24. The Birds is a classic Alfred Hitchcock movie.
25. In Alan's opinion, seventy-five dollars is a reasonable hourly rate.

DAY # 1: Lesson**Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?**

Did you know that the English language is a bit like clothing? Most of us have different categories of clothing that we wear for different occasions—maybe a swimsuit for the beach, shorts for playing basketball, a heavy coat for winter, flip-flops for hanging around. Most of us choose what we wear according to the circumstances. Show up on the beach in a heavy coat with a hood, and people are likely to look at you as if you were odd.

Most of us also choose language according to the circumstances—at least to some degree. We may use certain slang or even current expressions around our friends, but not around our grandmothers. We may write one way in a text message to a friend and another way when we answer questions for a school assignment. We may use certain words and language when talking to parents of a three-year-old we are babysitting, and very different words when we talk to the three-year-old herself. If we live in a neighborhood where many people have the same ethnic background, we probably use words that someone from a different area wouldn't understand. Language also differs according to the area of the country where we live. For example, in some parts of the country, people commonly say *sack*. In others, they say *bag*. In some areas, they say *pop*. In others, they say *soda*.

Language differs among families, too. In one family, the word *ain't* might be used all the time and be considered perfectly acceptable. In another family, parents would instantly correct a child for saying *ain't*. In another one, *ain't* would be fine for some situations, but not for others.

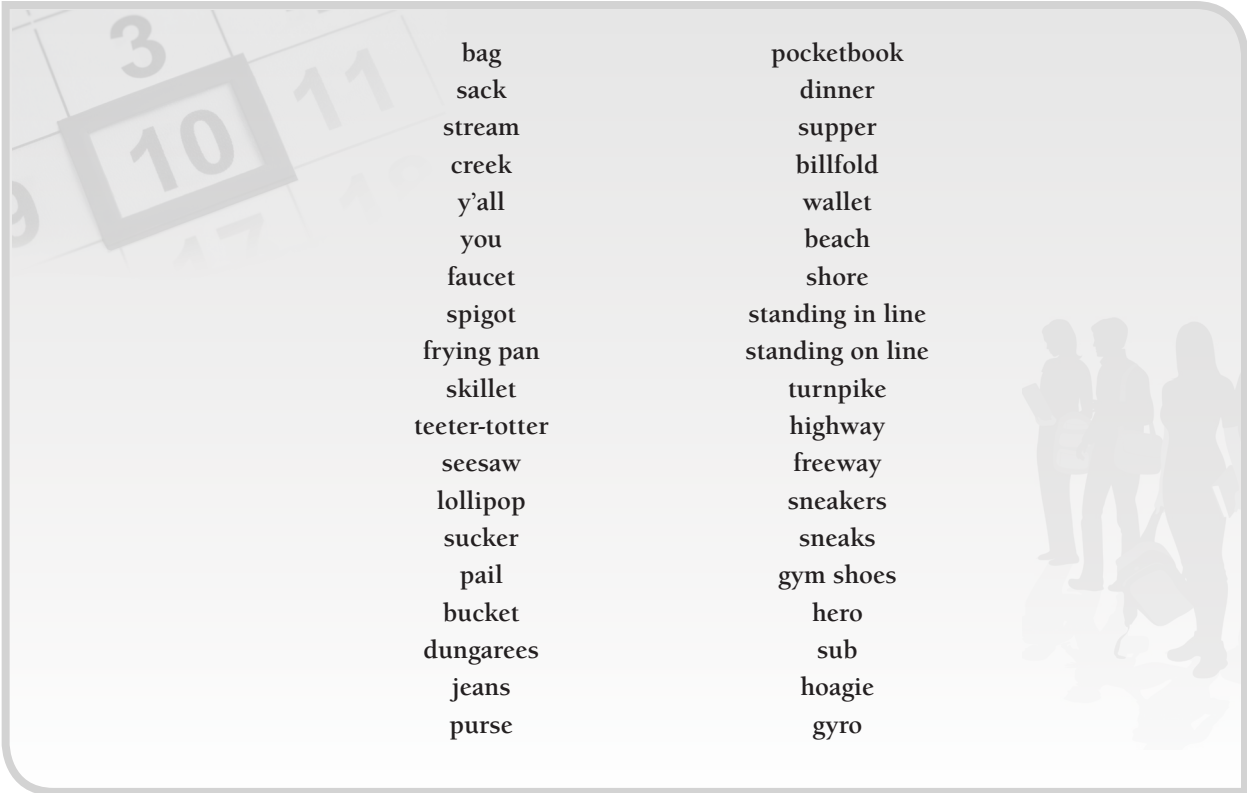
Standard American English. Over the years, one “standard” form of English has developed, and that standard form is the language of newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs, TV, textbooks, most fiction and nonfiction, pamphlets, instruction books, etc. People anywhere in the country understand it. It is also the English that you study in school. Certain rules, customs, and practices have become standard over the years, and most experts agree on them, helping make communication clearer and more efficient. When you know the rules and can communicate well in this standard form of English, you have a power that others do not. Although you may choose *not* to use it for some situations, when you want to use it, you can. That gives you a huge advantage over someone who doesn't know Standard American English and, therefore, can't choose. Many doors may be closed to that person.

Knowing the rules, in other words, gives you power. It gives you choices. That's why we study the rules and how to use them.

What do you say? You may know that many words used in England are not words we use in the U.S. For example, a truck is a *lorry* in England. *Cookies* are *biscuits*. *Elevators* are *lifts*.

But the English language also differs in the way it's used across the United States. Look at the words on the following page. Which ones are terms you use? Which are not? What terms can you add to the list?

English Terms



bag
sack
stream
creek
y'all
you
faucet
spigot
frying pan
skillet
teeter-totter
seesaw
lollipop
sucker
pail
bucket
dungarees
jeans
purse
pocketbook
dinner
supper
billfold
wallet
beach
shore
standing in line
standing on line
turnpike
highway
freeway
sneakers
sneaks
gym shoes
hero
sub
hoagie
gyro

Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Verbs



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



Teacher's Pet Publications

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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: VERBS helps students understand how important verbs are in the English language. Through a variety of lessons and exercises, students will learn to identify and use verbs more effectively.

They will learn how carefully chosen verbs can add life to their writing and the importance of consistency and accuracy in verb tense. In addition, students will learn the differences between regular and irregular verbs and how to navigate those differences. The Unit will also cover the advantages of using active voice over passive to strengthen writing. Finally, students will learn how to choose correctly when it comes to troublesome verbs, such as *sit* and *set*.

Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Verbs takes a practical approach to verb usage, teaching what students most need to know about verbs and how to use them correctly and effectively in speech and writing.

Many students are often baffled and turned off when lessons begin with a great deal of grammatical terminology. These lessons do not emphasize the terminology, except where needed, as in, for example, the differences between *linking* and *helping* verbs. However, some familiarity with subjects, predicates, punctuation, parts of speech, etc., is assumed. In addition, various aspects of verbs such as knowing all the tenses or the emphatic form are beyond the needs of the students for whom these lessons are intended. Other information, such as verb phrases or verbs that could be used as either action or linking verbs (i.e., look, seem, appear, etc.,) are dealt with, but not in great detail.

One aspect of *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Verbs* that is different from the other Units in this series is that Day #5 offers the teacher a choice, depending upon the individual class and its needs:

- 5A. review what has been covered already, along with some assessment possibilities;
- 5B. an overview of additional tenses and how they influence the time factor of a sentence.

The packet contents at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Reviewing verbs—what they are, how they are used, and why they are important
3. Reviewing helping and linking verbs and setting the stage for verb tenses
4. Helping students understand what verb tenses are and why they should not needlessly switch tenses
- 5A. Review of the first week of verbs
- 5B. Helping students recognize that changes in verb tense affect meaning and placement in time
6. Helping students understand the difference between regular and irregular verbs
7. Helping students use irregular verbs and troublesome verbs correctly
8. Helping students learn the difference between active and passive voice—and learn to write in active voice for most purposes
9. Reviewing what students have learned about verbs in *10 Days to A+ English: Verbs*
10. Final test

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess how well students understand verbs and how to use them correctly
- To assess how well students understand the basics of verb tense
- To assess students' ability to use regular and irregular verbs correctly, as well as troublesome verbs, such as sit/set
- To assess how well students can recognize active voice and its superiority over passive voice for most purposes

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give students the pretest, "Verbs."
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, provide a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will complete a quick review of verbs and why they are important. They will learn about verb tense, regular and irregular verbs, and handling troublesome verbs correctly. They will also learn to make their own writing more effective by choosing verbs carefully and writing in active voice.
3. **Lesson.** Present "Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?" You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

While the message of the lesson is important, it is *very* important that the teacher handle it carefully. While it is true that poor language skills often lead others to think a person is poorly educated or even not very bright, it is important that students understand that such a stereotype isn't necessarily true. Of course, there are brilliant people in the world who have poor language skills, and there are poorly educated people who have brilliant language skills. However, people with poor language skills often encounter limitations in their ability to influence others, to gain respect, and to become successful.

DAY # 1: Pretest

Verbs • Part A

Directions: Underline the verbs in the following sentences. Some sentences will have more than one verb, so make sure to underline every verb.

1. Marlon accidentally squeezed the toothpaste on the sink.
2. Those Miller children are shy and avoid other people.
3. Has anyone seen Stephanie?
4. Marguerite photocopied the reference material and gave it to the boss.
5. Have the Estradas arrived for dinner yet?
6. The family will not carry their luggage when they are in the airport on Thursday.
7. Mr. Lopez is really funnier than he seems to his kids.
8. Will you please bring some of your great artichoke dip to the party?
9. The parakeet imitated its owner's voice.
10. Ilya looked unhappy about the arrangements and left the hotel.

Verbs • Part B

Directions: Identify whether the underlined verb in each sentence below is in present tense, past tense, or future tense. Not all verbs are underlined. If a verb is in present tense, write "present" in the blank provided. If it is past tense, write "past" in the blank provided. If it is in future tense, write "future" in the blank provided.

11. _____ Joe will go to the store.
12. _____ The president gave his speech at 7:00 p.m. Central Time.
13. _____ Veronica scowled when her computer crashed.
14. _____ Sylvia absolutely adores her pet ferret.
15. _____ Russ really wants to travel to South America this summer.
16. _____ Jocelyn will come over as soon as she gets off work.
17. _____ Grandpa needed some extra help with his yard last year.
18. _____ Sue accidentally started a fire in the bedroom.

19. _____ Mrs. Yamaguchi finds a lot of bargains when she shops.
20. _____ The house is new.

Verbs • Part C

Directions: Some of the passages below include an unnecessary and incorrect shift in tense, from past to present, for example. If the sentence is correct in the way it uses tenses, put a “C” in the blank provided. If it is incorrect because of a shift in tense, put an “I” in the blank provided.

21. ____ Karina knew she needed to call a plumber when she saw water leaking all over the basement floor. She ran upstairs, looked up plumbers in her area on her computer, and began calling. No one answers. Finally, she reached Alvin’s Trusty Plumbing, and Alvin himself promised to come right over. He did not.
22. ____ Terrence and Midge decide that *Twilight in Manitoba* is just the movie they are in the mood to see. They drive 15 miles, pay for their tickets, and pick the best seats in the house. Then, the projector breaks down. They are not happy at all.
23. ____ Felipe challenged Brent to a game of pool, and Brent was happy to accept the challenge. He suspected that Felipe wasn’t nearly very good. Then, Felipe starts playing, and Brent sees that he is wrong. Brent went home very depressed, but Felipe went home happy.
24. ____ Courtney drove her sister and her dog to a cabin in the mountains, parking in the lot at the base of the mountain and skiing in. They pulled sleds carrying all of their supplies. When they get to the cabin, they see that a tree has fallen across the back of the cabin, crushing it. They turn around and ski back out again.
25. ____ The librarian looks over the top of her glasses and gives the two whispering teenagers a frown. They ignore her. The librarian walks over and tells them to quiet down. They quiet down for a minute, but then start talking again as soon as the librarian leaves. Their voices got louder and louder, when one of the girl’s cell phone rings. The librarian sighs, walks over, and points to the door. “Leave. Now,” she says firmly.

Verbs • Part D

Directions: Place an “I” by each sentence that contains an incorrect verb form and write the correct verb form in the blank. Write C in the blank of any sentence in which the verbs are correct.

26. ____ _____ I’m so happy that the class has chose me as their president!
27. ____ _____ The coach has drove the team so hard that everyone is exhausted.
28. ____ _____ Haven’t you went to pick up some milk at the store?
29. ____ _____ After the seventh hot dog, Nathaniel decided he had eaten enough.
30. ____ _____ In every triathlon, Darin has ran the fastest of all the participants.
31. ____ _____ We could have drank the lemonade, but we wanted Coke instead.

32. ____ Have you wrote your aunt a thank-you note yet?
33. ____ The cooks have flew around the country showing off their special lasagna.
34. ____ The ten-year-old has already blew out the candles on his cake.
35. ____ You would have fell if the dog had not grabbed your shirt sleeve.

Verbs • Part E

Directions: For each sentence below, underline the correct verb in parentheses.

36. Jada has (forgot, forgotten) her gym clothes every day this week.
37. Have you (sang, sung) in the choir every year since 7th grade?
38. The club has (given, gave) a lot of money to charity.
39. The tree house we loved so much has been (torn, tore) down.
40. She could have (went, gone) with Laura's older brother, but he stubbornly decided not to.
41. Paulina is (setting, sitting) by the window, waiting patiently for her date.
42. After Dolores finished cleaning the house, she was exhausted and (lay, laid) down on the sofa for half an hour.
43. Aretha and Donald (set, sat) all the dishes in the drainer to dry.
44. When they saw his paddles wash up on shore, everyone worried that the man in the canoe had (drownded, drowned).
45. Ethan has (laid, lain) his wet boots in the sun to dry.

Verbs • Part F

Directions: Place an "A" beside each sentence that is written in active voice. Place a "P" beside each sentence that is written in passive voice.

46. ____ In the storm, the roof was destroyed.
47. ____ Heinrich plays the tuba in a band.
48. ____ Lizzie watched the Super Bowl with her dad.
49. ____ The witnesses were asked to sign statements about the robbery.
50. ____ An annoying song was played over and over again on the sound system by the restaurant owner.

DAY # 1: Pretest • Answer Key

Verbs • Part A

1. Marlon accidentally squeezed the toothpaste on the sink.
2. Those Miller children are shy and avoid other people.
3. Has anyone seen Stephanie?
4. Marguerite photocopied the reference material and gave it to the boss.
5. Have the Estradas arrived for dinner yet?
6. The family will not carry their luggage when they are in the airport on Thursday.
7. Mr. Lopez is really funnier than he seems to his kids.
8. Will you please bring some of your great chocolate dip to the party?
9. The parakeet imitated its owner's voice.
10. Ilya looked unhappy about the arrangements and left the hotel.

Verbs • Part B

11. Future
12. Past
13. Past
14. Present
15. Present
16. Future
17. Past
18. Past
19. Present
20. Present

Verbs • Part C

21. I
22. C
23. I
24. I
25. I

Verbs • Part D

26. I has chosen
27. I has driven
28. I have gone
29. CORRECT
30. I has run
31. I could have drunk
32. I have written
33. I have flown
34. I has blown
35. I would have fallen

Verbs • Part E

36. Jada has forgotten her gym clothes every day this week.
37. Have you sung in the choir every year since 7th grade?
38. The club has given a lot of money to charity.
39. The tree house we loved so much has been torn down.
40. She could have gone with Laura's older brother, but he stubbornly decided not to.
41. Paulina is sitting by the window, waiting patiently for her date.
42. After Dolores finished cleaning the house, she was exhausted and lay down on the sofa for half an hour.

43. Aretha and Donald set all the dishes in the drainer to dry.
44. When they saw his paddles wash up on shore, everyone worried that the man in the canoe had drowned.
45. Ethan has laid his wet boots in the sun to dry.

Verbs • Part F

46. P
47. A
48. A
49. P
50. P

DAY #1: Lesson**Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?**

When writers want to suggest that a character is uneducated or not very bright, what is one of the first things they do?

They have the character say something ungrammatical:

“He don’t live here no more.”

“I ain’t telling you none of that.”

“I bringed the money like you ask.”

Audiences get the message.

Why is that? It is because of *assumptions* we have about language. We may not be consciously aware of these assumptions, but they exist in our culture. We expect people who have gone to school to speak and write in certain ways. We expect intelligent people to use a certain kind of language. Like it or not, we associate poor grammar with lack of education or low intelligence—even if we aren’t aware of doing so.

This association may not be fair. It may not be right. It may not even be true most of the time. The association of poor language skills with low education or low intelligence, however, is an association that is widely held. People perceive it to be true.

That brings up the #1 reason why we study language rules in school: Getting an education involves meeting certain expectations, and one of those expectations is learning to use language correctly.

If you hate studying grammar rules, you may be thinking, “Well, I don’t care. It just simply doesn’t matter to me.” That may be true, but what if it *does* matter, someday? What if you are in line for a great job, and strong communication skills will help you? What if you want to change a law in your town, or you want to explain yourself in a court case? What if you want to make a good impression on your future spouse’s parents? What if you simply want to tell others your ideas? Maybe the language you use won’t matter—but what if it does? The truth is that most people, throughout their lives, need to tap into the power of words. If they can use words well, they are ahead of the game. If they can’t, they may have a much more difficult time earning respect for their ideas.

Respect can lead to power. People who can communicate well often have opportunities denied to others. There is power in words. Here are three real-life examples. They are true, though the names have been changed.

Case #1. Sue Atkinson was a passenger on an airplane, and two people brought their 95-year-old father with them to sit in the exit row. The man was clearly having problems both walking and knowing where he was, and it was quite clear that he would be unable to help in an emergency—something that is required of those sitting in the exit row. The flight attendants tried to get him to move, but the people with him were adamant, saying only, “He’s fine.” He clearly was *not* fine, yet no one was willing to make a fuss and have him moved.

Sue was upset that the flight attendants weren't willing to stand up for the safety of the passengers. She wrote a polite letter to the airline, telling what happened and suggesting that flight attendants should be *required* to move people who are clearly not able to assist in an emergency. She received an answer from the airline, as well as a \$100 gift certificate to use for another flight. She has not seen a similar problem with the exit row on any flights, and she travels a lot. Her sensible, well-written letter got results.

Case #2. Ron Tancredo wrote a letter to a college after a terrible experience signing up for a college job fair. The process he experienced turned into a near-riot, with people grabbing informational papers and pushing to the head of the line. He wrote an excellent letter of complaint, suggesting a more sensible way to handle the sign-up process. The college agreed. He received a letter of thanks, and the process was changed.

Case #3. Many years ago, when smoking was allowed nearly everywhere, Karl Osborne decided that his town should ban smoking in restaurants. He was sick of having smoke blown in his face while he ate his hamburgers. He spearheaded a change in the law, and restaurant owners were furious. So were smokers. However, his speaking and writing skills were so polished that he began to gain followers. He didn't yell, as some of the people did. He didn't call names. He simply stated his case, reasonably and clearly. Eventually, to everyone's surprise, the law was passed, largely due to his efforts. It is now one of the town's most popular ordinances.

What's the difference? You may be thinking, if you have something important to say, it doesn't matter how you say it. That belief may be true, to some extent, but the opposite is also true: Readers and listeners often dismiss an individual who speaks poorly, as not knowing what he or she is talking about. For example, imagine that you are a storeowner and receive the following two letters:

Dear owner

i went to ur store yesterday & the person who waited on me wuz rilly rude. i ask her if the socks were cotten and she says she don't care. i jus wanted u to no that my friends and me ain't coming to ur store again cuz the dum sales lady.

Mr. Joe Stern

Dear store owner,

I went into your store on Thursday, November 17, at around 2:00 p.m. to buy some socks. I liked your merchandise, but I had a question for the person who waited on me. I wanted to know if the socks were 100% cotton. She just shrugged her shoulders and said, "Who cares?" She didn't offer to try to find out. She simply acted as if I was an idiot for asking.

Needless to say, I left the store without buying the socks. I know it wasn't going to be a large purchase, but small purchases add up. Also, who knows how much I would have spent next time, if I'd had a good experience? I know that if I owned a store, I would want to know if someone was causing me to lose business. That's why I'm sending you this letter about my experience.

Sincerely,

Mr. Joe Stern

Which letter would you take more seriously? Many owners would look at the second and take some action. Many would dismiss the first writer as a crackpot. Maybe they shouldn't, but the truth is that they would. Whether we like it or not, *how* we say things matters. The better you can handle language, the more power you have in your life.

Discussion. Can you think of any examples when good communication skills have led to power—or when poor communication skills have held someone back? The following are some areas to think about:

- candidates for office
- leaders in your school
- teachers and principals
- neighbors
- famous people, either famous now or earlier in history