

Grammar & Mechanics

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Learning Outcomes

- In this chapter you'll learn principles of grammar, spelling, and punctuation that will help you correctly and eloquently get your message across.
- Precise grammar and mechanics will convince your readers that you belong in their discourse community and that they should listen to you.

4.1 Grammar Principles

Welcome to the grammar chapter! This information is designed to help you in several ways. First, you may have had lingering questions during your high school and college education about where to insert punctuation or how to make sentences better constructed and less awkward. We hope that this information will help you fill in any missing gaps so you can write even more effectively throughout your life.

Second, in today's world, we "meet" many people through our writing before we are formally introduced in person. This writing (via email or text, for example) may create a "first impression" and influence their expectations about our level of professionalism. Good composition and an understanding of grammar can make a positive impression and get important things done.

Finally, the world needs the information we can offer; we are more likely to be able to spread that message if we can convey it clearly. In addition, we may be able to publish it more widely or be seen as more credible if our writing is engaging, authentic, interesting, and well-edited. To accomplish good style, knowing the fundamentals is important.

As you proceed through each section, take time to read the information slowly and carefully. Make note of the examples and the ways they demonstrate the principle being discussed. Note sections for review that are new to you or where you

might need more practice.

This grammar instruction includes three major sections to share principles of

1. Structure
2. Power, and
3. Polish.

Structure represents the building block principles that help you understand the organization of sentences and teaches ways to add punctuation to keep your meaning clear to the reader. The **Power** section contains rules that can help your writing gain more convincing power by deliberately managing the placement of words and phrases. Finally, the **Polish** section discusses principles to help you apply polishing touches that will help your writing go from good to great.

Click on the links below to read the content of each section of this chapter.

[SECTION 1: STRUCTURE](#)

- [Rule #1. Separate and Set Off Main Clauses Correctly](#)
 - 1A. Choosing punctuation to fit your sentence.
 - 1B. Introducing your ideas
 - 1C. Using detours in your sentences
 - 1D. Constructing lists with punctuation
- [Rule #2. Follow Agreement and Reference Rules](#)
 - 2A. Match the number of your subjects and verbs
 - 2B. Match the case in your pronouns
 - 2C. Avoid ambiguous references

[SECTION 2: POWER](#)

- [Rule #3. Increase Your Credibility with Respectful and Logical Language](#)
 - 3A. Eliminate bias or stereotyping
 - 3B. Avoid absolute language
 - 3C. Arrange words in your sentences logically
- [Rule #4. Don't Confuse Words](#)
 - 4A. Affect and Effect
 - 4B. Imply and Infer
 - 4C. Complement and Compliment, Counsel and Council
 - 4D. Lie and Lay, Pour and Pore
 - 4E. Fewer and Less, Number and Amount
 - 4F. Allusion and Illusion; Principal and Principle; Sight, Cite, and Site
 - 4G. Borrowed Greek and Latin Words

[SECTION 3: POLISH](#)

- [Rule #5. Pay Attention to the Small Details](#)
 - 5A. Use parallelism to increase flow
 - 5B. Insert hyphens appropriately
 - 5C. Use apostrophes appropriately
- [Rule #6. Capitalize, Count, and Quote with Care](#)
 - 6A. Understand when to capitalize
 - 6B. Know how to abbreviate terms and format numbers
 - 6C. Employ quotation marks consistently

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