



Steps to **success**

Grammar Refresher

The mission of the Student Success Center (SSC) is to support the college's learning environment and promote student success through graduation and beyond. Your future is our vision. We have a variety of student services and open computer labs to help you reach your goals.

Various locations are open throughout the campus, and SSC Specialists and/or peer tutors are available to support students in different disciplines, including:

- Math
- Writing
- Reading
- Study skills
- Speech

Students are seen by appointment or on a first-come, first-served, walk-in basis, depending upon tutor availability.

Please call (618) 468-4SSC (4772) or visit www.lc.edu/ssc for locations and availability.

Grammar Refresher

Clauses, Subjects, and Verbs

An independent clause has a subject, a verb, and expresses a complete thought. An independent clause is a complete sentence.

- Subject = who or what is doing the action
- Verb = the action

Example: John jumps on the trampoline.

- Subject = John
- Verb = jumps

Some verbs are linking verbs.

Example: Nathan is scared.

- Subject = Nathan
- Verb (linking) = is

A dependent clause has a subject and verb, too, but it is not a complete sentence because it does not express a complete thought.

Example: When they go the grocery store

- Subject = they
- Verb = go
- NOT A COMPLETE THOUGHT because we do not know what happens when they go to the grocery store.

A dependent clause should be connected to an independent clause. Only independent clauses can exist as stand-alone sentences.

Example: When they go to the grocery store, they buy lots of junk food.

- Subject = they
- Verb = buy

Connecting Clauses

Two independent clauses can be combined in three ways:

1. a comma with a coordinating conjunction

There are seven coordinating conjunctions. Just remember **FANBOYS**. (**F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o)

Example: I ate McDonald's for lunch, **and** I ate Subway for dinner.

2. a semi-colon

Example: I ate McDonald's for lunch**;** I ate Subway for dinner.

3. a semi-colon with a conjunctive adverb.

Example: I ate McDonald's for lunch**;** **also,** I ate Subway for dinner.

Don't forget, too, that you can just use a period after independent clauses. Not all sentences have to be connected. Coordinating conjunctions are great for connecting like ideas and for creating sentences of various lengths. Semi-colons should be used sparingly in writing; only use them when you intentionally want to connect two independent clauses with one another for a specific purpose.

A dependent clause and an independent clause are connected as follows:

If the dependent clause comes first, use a comma.

Example: When they go to the grocery store, they buy lots of junk food.

Dependent clause = When they go to the grocery store,

Independent clause = they buy lots of junk food.

If the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, no comma is needed.

Example: They buy lots of junk food when they go to the grocery store.

Point of View

In essay writing especially, your instructor might ask that you write a first-person essay or that you write only in third-person. Below is a chart to help you remember what's what.

Point of View	Singular	Plural
1st	I, me, mine, my	we, us, our
2nd	you, your	you, your
3rd	he, she, him, her, it	they, them, their

Common Errors

1. Not using commas correctly. Use commas:
 - a. **after an introductory phrase**
Example: Luckily, we have a snow day.
Example: When it snows, we have a snow day.
 - b. **to separate items in a series**
Example: I bought bananas, apples, and oranges.
Example: My aunt ran a red light, hit a stop sign, and crashed into a fire hydrant.
 - c. **to connect two independent clauses**
Example: I like dogs, and I like cats.
Example: When I went outside, I saw that it had rained, and I also saw a rainbow.
 - d. **with direct quotations**
Example: "I like dogs," she said.
Example: The reporter stated, "It was a long day."
 - e. **to set off the name of the person spoken to**
Example: James, eat your vegetables.
Example: Let's eat, Grandma! (Do you see how scary that would be with no comma?)
 - f. **to separate dates and city/states**
Example: It is March 3, 2008.
Example: The Leaky Cauldron is located in London, England.
2. Run-on sentences and comma splices
 - a. A run-on sentence is when two independent clauses are not separated with correct punctuation.
Example: I remember seeing Santa at the mall he was scary.

The first sentence ends after the word "mall." You could put a period there, or a coordinating conjunction with a comma, or a semi-colon:

I remember seeing Santa at the mall. He was scary.
I remember seeing Santa at the mall, and he was scary.
I remember seeing Santa at the mall; he was scary.
 - b. A comma splice is when two independent clauses are separated with ONLY a comma.
Example: I remember seeing Santa at the mall, he was scary.
You can use a comma, but you also have to use a coordinating conjunction:

*I remember seeing Santa at the mall, **and** he was scary.*
3. There/their/they're errors
 - a. There refers to a location (I put it there).
 - b. Their shows that something belongs to people (It is their lunch).
 - c. They're is a contraction of they + are (They're walking down the hall).
4. Capitalization errors
 - a. Make sure your name, all the important words in your title, the first letter of the first word of each sentence, the names of other people, and the names of proper nouns (titles of books, movies, articles, websites, etc.) are capitalized.
5. Possession errors

- a. Apostrophes are used to show ownership; do not place apostrophes in plural nouns.
- b. Singular possessive nouns show that one person owns the item (Annabel's lunch), while plural possessive nouns show that a group owns the item(s) (the students' lunches).
- c. Place the apostrophe before the S in the case of a singular possessive noun, and place it after the S in the case of a plural possessive noun.

Editing for Errors

When you finish an assignment, you should always, always, always take the time to read back over your work. If you're writing an essay, you will want to spend time revising before you edit. You don't want to spend your time editing only to discover that an entire section of your paper needs to be deleted.

Editing tips:

- Use Microsoft Word and run spell and grammar check. MS Word will NOT catch every mistake, but it does help.
- Print your work out. Do not read it on a computer screen.
- Read your work one sentence at a time. You aren't reading for pleasure here. You're reading to catch mistakes. So go very slowly.
- Read aloud.
- Read your work more than once. If your instructor says you have lots of mistakes in your writing, read for one particular mistake at a time.
- Read from the end of your work to the beginning, and again, look at just one sentence at a time. Reading from the end to the beginning may help you find mistakes you didn't notice before.
- Have a friend, family member, or fellow student read your work to you. Make sure you have a copy, too, so that you can mark anything that doesn't sound right.

Do not turn in work that you haven't edited. Not only is it unprofessional, but your intended meaning may be lost because whoever is reading your work may get so caught up in irritating errors that they may not even care what your message is.