Modes of Writing

Just as there are many different forms of writing (for example, lab reports, formal essays and business letters), there are also many different types of writing that you can use. While the same basic principles apply to most writing, different types of writing have unique purposes as well as problems. Knowing – and using properly – each of the following types of writing will help you communicate clearly and effectively.

- **Analysis**  
  An analysis breaks a subject down into its fundamental parts. It explains how the smaller parts make up the whole.

- **Cause/Effect**  
  Cause/effect writing draws connections between two events. It answers the question “Why did something happen?” It can also predict what will happen as a result of a previous action.

- **Classification**  
  Classification is a way of grouping things or sorting out relationships. It brings two or more related terms together and categorizes them according to type or kind.

- **Communication**  
  This type of writing includes formal communications, such as resumes, manuals and letters of application. These communications are written in appropriate formats, for a definite audience and with a clear purpose.

- **Compare/Contrast**  
  Compare/contrast writing points out similarities or differences between two or more concepts, objects or people. Comparing highlights the similarities between fundamentally different things, while contrasting highlights the differences between fundamentally similar things.

- **Debate/Argumentation**  
  This type of writing attempts to prove a truth or falsehood. It differs from persuasion in that the writer approaches the subject objectively and logically and does not rely on emotional appeals.

- **Definition**  
  A definition primarily tells a reader what a term means. The term can be an object, an action or an idea. Definition separates the chosen term from all others, so that the reader understands its precise use and nature.

- **Description**  
  Descriptive writing paints a word picture in order to leave a dominant impression with the reader. It requires appeals to the various senses and relies on precise word choice and effective organization.

- **Evaluation/Critique**  
  An evaluation determines the worth or relevance of a source. The most common type of evaluation is a movie or literary review.

- **Personal Narrative**  
  This is a narrative or story that develops complex characters, plot structure, point of view and setting. This type of writing organizes ideas in meaningful sequence and includes sensory details and concrete language to advance the story line.

- **Persuasion**  
  In persuasion, the writer uses logic, testimonials and emotional appeals to convince the reader to think or act in a prescribed manner. Common forms of persuasion are reviews, editorials and commercials.

- **Problem/Solution**  
  The writer identifies a problem, examines the advantages and disadvantages of possible solutions to the problem and determines the best solution to the problem. The specific form depends on the writer’s purpose, the identity of the audience and the nature of the problem.
Modes of Writing

- **Process**
  This type of writing describes in detail either how to do something (e.g. providing the proof of a theorem) or how something occurs (e.g. explaining a chemical reaction).

- **Research Report**
  A research document crafts a logical argument or thesis and contains comprehensive, supporting information from a variety of credible and cited resources. In addition, this type of writing conforms to a style manual.

- **Summary**
  A summary presents someone else’s ideas in different words. Unlike a paraphrase, however, a summary reduces a long passage to its essential ideas.

### The 6 + 1 Traits of Good Writing

1. **Ideas and Content**
   The writer needs to know the topic, be knowledgeable about it and stick to it. The best place to start is with a good thesis statement. It should be concise and accurately describe the contents of the paper. Most writing assignments benefit from specific support (for instance, facts, examples, statistics and quotations). Use support to make your paper more convincing. Be sure that every sentence is relevant to the topic; do not stray.

2. **Organization**
   Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing. Choose the most logical organizational pattern for the paper. Some patterns you may wish to consider include chronological, spatial, general to specific and least important to most important. Also, follow your teacher’s guidelines for specific assignments.

3. **Voice**
   Voice is the magic, the wit, along with the feeling, conviction and soul of the individual writer coming out through the words. Just as each person has a unique speech pattern, each author has a unique writing pattern. Do not try to make your paper sound like someone else wrote it. Develop a writing style that reflects your own personality.

4. **Word Choice**
   Word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader. The writer is responsible for every word on the paper. Be sure the words you choose are specific and appropriate. Generally, academic writing assignments require a somewhat formal tone, so choose words that meet this criterion. Avoid slang and colloquial speech.

5. **Sentence Fluency**
   Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns and the way in which the writing plays to the ear – not just to the eye. To achieve fluency, vary your sentence structure and length so that the reader does not get bored. Also, read your paper out loud several times while drafting and revising to make sure it sounds good.

6. **Conventions**
   Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece – spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, capitalization and punctuation. Your paper should be free of all mechanical errors. Proofread thoroughly to eliminate problems before publishing. There is no excuse for errors in your published draft.

+[1.] **Presentation**
   Presentation concerns the form and layout of the text and its readability. The final paper should be pleasing to the eye and follow the format required by your teacher.
The Writing Process

There are five stages of the writing process: prewriting, outlining, drafting, revising / editing and publishing.

✧ Prewriting

It is important to know what you are going to write before you write it. In this stage of the writing process, you must gather all of your information and plan how you are going to communicate that information. This step may include any combination of the following:

- note-taking
- journal writing
- class discussion
- free writing
- library research
- interviews
- brainstorming
- mind mapping
- questioning

✧ Outlining

In making an outline, you must make major decisions concerning the content and the organization of your composition. It is no exaggeration to say that more than half the work on a composition has been done when the outline has been completed. Two kinds of outline are in common use: the topic outline and the sentence outline.

- **The Topic Outline** – In the topic outline each item is merely a topic to be discussed in the paper; it is not a sentence. For most of the outlining that you will do, the topic outline will be adequate; in fact, it will be preferable because it is easier to make and is clear enough to serve its purpose.

- **The Sentence Outline** – The sentence outline is always clearer because it give in more detail the exact meaning of each topic.

✧ Rules for Correct Outline Form

1. Place the title above the outline. It is not one of the numbered or lettered topics.
2. The terms *Introduction, Body, Conclusion* should not be included in the outline. They are not topics to be discussed in the composition. They are merely organizational units in the author’s mind.
3. Use Roman numerals for main topics. Subtopics are given letters and numbers as follows: capital letters, Arabic numerals, small letters, Arabic numerals in parentheses, small letters in parentheses.
4. There must never be, under any topic, a lone subtopic; there must be either two or more subtopics or none at all. Subtopics are divisions of the topic above them. A topic cannot be divided into fewer than two parts.

✧ Correct Arrangement of Numbers and Letters

I. (main topic)
   A.
   B.
   1.
   2.
   a.
   b.
   (1)
   (2)
   (a)
   (b)

II. (main topic)

✧ Drafting

Once you have gathered all of your information and planned the paper, you should write a first draft. At this stage, do not worry about conventions i.e. spelling, grammar, punctuation or neatness. The idea is simply to get your thoughts on paper. Let your thoughts flow without the concern of evaluating any flaws.
(The Writing Process continued)

❖ Revising/Editing
This stage has often been thought of as the editing stage in which the writer or a proofreader checks for errors in spelling, punctuation and the like. Actually, the revising stage encompasses a more comprehensive look at the paper. The writer checks for completeness in organization, the overall effectiveness of the paper, proper word choice, appropriate voice and sentence fluency. In order to revise effectively, you may want to try the following techniques:

- peer editing
- reading the paper aloud
- having a friend read the paper to you
- conferencing with your teacher

❖ Publishing
Having now revised your paper, it is time to publish it. At this point, edit and proof for grammar and conventions. Make sure the paper strictly adheres to all guidelines as assigned by the teacher.

Standard Manuscript Format (for most essays)

Name  
Class  
Date  
Assignment  

Title  

Indent and begin writing. Remember to double space when typing and always follow your teacher’s specific guidelines for each assignment. A title page is not necessary unless the teacher specifies one. Font should be at 12 pt and a standard type like Times New Roman or Ariel. All margins should be set at 1 inch. Page numbers and writer’s last name should begin on page 2 in the upper right hand corner.

“I” and “You”  

Although much of what you write may be informal (letters to friends, postcards from vacations) and requires first and second person (“I” and “you”), most of what you write for school and work will be formal. Formal writing requires consistent use of third person (“he,” “she” and “it”).

❖ Eradicating First Person

Most writers use first person to state an opinion, and such usage is unnecessary; opinions are clear from their content.

I think The Burmese Harp is a fantastic movie. The Burmese Harp is an artistic masterpiece.

NOTE: The second example makes a more powerful statement than the first, but does not use “I.”

❖ Eradicating Second Person

As you probably have noticed, much of this style manual uses second person. Second person addresses the reader specifically and is often used for directions, but again, as you will be writing formally in school and business, avoid second person.

You can imagine trying to see through the smoke from 500 muskets firing at once. (Poor) The smoke of 500 muskets firing simultaneously clouded the air. (Better)
Transitions

Transition devices are used to achieve coherence, a smooth “flow” from one sentence to the next within the paragraph or from one paragraph to the next within an essay. This connection or transition between sentences or paragraphs is accomplished in these ways:

- By using a **pronoun** that refers to a person or an idea mentioned in the preceding paragraph.
- By repeating in the first sentence of a paragraph a **key word** used in the preceding paragraph.
- By referring to a preceding idea with a **direct reference**, often in summary form.
- By using **connecting words or phrases** which show relationships between ideas.

Common Transition Words and Phrases and the Relationships They Show

- **Addition**: again, also, and, another, as a result, as well as, besides, both-and, consequently, equally important, however, in addition, in addition to, in fact, in the same way, in the second place, finally, first (second, etc.), for example, for instance, further, furthermore, last, likewise, moreover, next, not only – but also, otherwise, thus, therefore, similarly, than, too
- **Cause and Result**: as a result, consequently, therefore, thus
- **Comparison**: analogous to, in like fashion, in like manner, likewise, similarly
- **Concession**: although, at any rate, at least, even though, granted that, in spite of, of course, though, still, while it may be true
- **Conclusion**: finally, therefore, thus, ultimately
- **Condition**: if, unless, until
- **Consequence**: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, due to, for this reason, hence, in other words, since, so, so that, then, therefore, thus, with the result that
- **Contrast**: although, at the same time, but, but still, by way of contrasting, conversely, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, nor, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, or, rather, still, though, while this may be true, yet
- **Details**: especially, including, in detail, in particular, namely, specifically
- **Emphasis**: above, again, all, also, besides, certainly, furthermore, in addition, in fact, in truth, indeed, of course, really, surely, to repeat, truly, what is more
- **Examples/Illustrations**: for example, for instance, in other words, in particular, namely, specifically, such as, that is, thus, to illustrate
- **Exception**: although, of course, though to be sure
- **Exclusion**: all but, all except, but that, neither-nor, not that
- **Manner and Method**: thus, for example, similarly, in this way
- **Position**: behind, here, there, around, next to, to the right of, down, up, close to
- **Space**: above, across, adjacent, along the edge, around, at the front, at the rear, at the left, at the right, at the top, at the bottom, behind, below, beneath, beside, beyond, in front of, in the background, in the center, in the distance, in the forefront, in the foreground, near by, nearer, next to, on the edge, on the side, on top, opposite, out of sight, over, straight ahead, surrounding, under, within sight
- **Time**: a few days later, after, afterward, afterwards, another, at first, at last, at length, at the same time, before, concurrently, during the morning (afternoon, evening, etc.), eventually, finally, first (second, etc.), for a minute (hour, day, etc.), formerly, generally, immediately, in the meantime, in order to, last, later, meanwhile, most important, next, ordinarily, originally, previously, simultaneously, soon, subsequently, then, to begin with, once, rarely, until, usually, when
Parts of Speech
All words in the English language can be divided into eight classes called parts of speech. Many words can be used as different parts of speech depending on their function in a sentence. The eight classes are as follows:

- **Noun** – a word used to name a person, place, thing, quality or idea (e.g. man, boy, desk, teacher, Iowa, patience, freedom)

  The man entered the room quietly.

- **Pronoun** – a word used to take the place of a noun (e.g. we, us, you, herself, this, who, they, he, she, it)

  You should have told her it was broken.

- **Verb** – a word used to show action or express a state of being (e.g. study, play, rest, shrugged, quit, is, are)

  --Common Helping Verbs (am, are, is, was, were, do, does, did, have, has, had, can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might, must)

  She sang while the orchestra played. (action verbs)  
  We are happy to hear that you feel better. (state of being or linking verbs)  
  She is going to the football game Friday night. (helping verb)

- **Adjective** – a word used to describe or limit a noun or pronoun (e.g. blue, tall, short, large, two, sad) Answers questions what kind, which one, how many.

  The cold and foggy night drove us indoors.

- **Adverb** – a word used to modify the meaning of a verb, an adjective or another adverb (e.g. quickly, slowly, skillfully, too, quite) Answers the questions how, when, where, to what extent

  Suddenly, he threw the ball too fast.

  NOTE: Suddenly modifies the verb threw, too modifies the adverb fast, and fast modifies the verb threw.

- **Preposition** -- a word used to show the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and some other word in the sentence. The preposition always appears in a phrase. The noun or pronoun at the end of a prepositional phrase is the object of the preposition.

  Mother went (into the store) (for some bread).

Here is a list of commonly used prepositions.

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- **Conjunction** – a word used to connect words, phrases and clauses within sentences (e.g. and, but, or, for, nor, yet, so)

  Jill and Mary stayed home, and they studied the whole time.

- **Interjection** – a word used to express sudden emotion or feeling; it has no grammatical connection with the sentence (e.g. Oh! Aha! Alas!)

  Hey! That is my new car you almost ran into!
Subjects and Predicates

A sentence consists of two parts: the subject and the predicate. The subject of the sentence is that part about which something is being said. The predicate is that part which says something about the subject.

The faculty and the students planned a new class schedule.

SUBJECT          PREDICATE
The faculty and the students planned a new class schedule.

At the end of the day comes our activity period.

PREDICATE          SUBJECT
At the end of the day comes our activity period.

These two main parts of sentences may consist of a single word or many words. The whole subject is called the complete subject; the whole predicate, the complete predicate.

• The simple subject is the principal word or group of words in the subject.
  Arizona State University in Tempe is an outstanding university.
  Complete Subject: Arizona State University in Tempe
  Simple Subject: Arizona State University

  NOTE: Simple subject includes the entire proper noun.

• The principal word or group of words in the predicate is called the simple predicate or verb.
  The faculty and staff planned a new class schedule for the fall.
  Complete Predicate: planned a new class schedule for the fall.
  Simple Predicate or Verb: planned

• A compound subject consists of two or more subjects that are joined by a conjunction and have the same verb. The usual connecting words are and and or.
  The White House and the Pentagon called a press conference.
  Compound Subject: The White House and the Pentagon

• A compound verb consists of two or more verbs that are joined by a conjunction and have the same subject.
  Mary McLeod Bethune established schools and worked on government committees.
  Compound Verbs: established and worked

Subject and Verb Agreement

It is imperative that when you write, you must have agreement between subject and verb.

• Singular subjects take singular verbs. Singular refers to one in number.
  A young woman lives next door.
  The art department prepared the exhibit.

• Plural subjects take plural verbs. Plural means more than one.
  Young women live next door.
  The boys sing.

• The number of the subject is not changed by a phrase following the subject.
  The performance was very funny.
  The performance of the first three clowns was very funny.
  NOTE: Performance, not clowns, is the subject of the sentence.

• Subjects joined by and take a plural verb.
  A horse and an elephant are mammals.
  Julia and her twin sister naturally look alike.
• Singular subjects joined by or or nor must take a singular verb.
  My brother or my sister is likely to be at home.
  Neither the president of the company nor the sales manager is a college graduate.
  Either Trina or Maria is sure to know the answer.

• When a singular and a plural subject are joined by or or nor, the verb agrees with the nearer subject.
  Either the judge or the lawyers are wrong.
  NOTE: It is usually possible to avoid this awkward construction altogether.
  Either the judge is wrong or the lawyers are.

• Two or more plural subjects joined by or or nor must have a plural verb.
  The girls or the boys are going to win.

• A collective noun takes a singular verb when the group it names acts as a single unit.
  The jury has reached a verdict.

• Nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning agree with singular verbs.
  Social studies has become my favorite subject.
  Measles is a dangerous disease for pregnant women.

• Singular indefinite pronouns take singular verbs.
  One of the paintings is missing.
  Everyone in our class has finished.

• Plural indefinite pronouns take plural verbs.
  Few of the contestants are here yet.
  Both of the players were late.

• The pronouns all, any, more, most, none and some usually take a singular verb if the antecedent is singular and a plural verb if it is plural.
  All of the soup was eaten.
  All of the seats were taken.

• A title is singular and must have a singular verb.
  Hard Times is a novel by Charles Dickens.

• A noun expressing an amount or measurement is usually singular and requires a singular verb.
  Fifty cents is enough to buy that piece of candy.

**Verbs**

Verb usage is determined through the statement of time (tense), part and voice. By definition, a tense is a form of a verb that shows the time of an action or a condition.

**Verb Tense**

• Verbs change in form to show the time of their action or the idea they express. The time expressed by a verb is its tense. The three forms are:
  Present Tense or present infinitive: do, give, ring, throw
  Past Tense: did, gave, rang, threw
  Past Participle: done, given, rung, thrown
• When writing about literature all analysis should be written in present tense.
  Huckleberry Finn runs away to live on a raft in the Mississippi River.

• When writing a formal essay the writer should stay in the same tense throughout the essay.
  Changing without reason from one tense to another within a sentence or essay creates an awkward and confusing effect. Stick to the tense you start with unless there is an excellent reason for changing.

Active and Passive Voice
Voice is the form of a verb that shows whether the subject is performing the action.

• A verb is active if its subject performs the action.
  Lightning struck the barn.
  Karen baked a chocolate cake.

• A verb is passive if its action is performed upon the subject. The passive form always consists of some form of the verb be plus the past participle.
  The barn was struck by lightning.
  A chocolate cake was baked by Karen.

• Use active voice whenever possible in writing.

Pronoun and Antecedents
A pronoun must refer clearly to the right antecedent. Avoid ambiguous reference, general reference and weak reference. One simple way of testing pronoun reference is to substitute the antecedent for the pronoun.

Weak: Charlie is always thinking about cars. It [cars?] is his only interest.
NOTE: The antecedent cannot be substituted; the reference is faulty.

Clear: Charlie is always thinking about cars. They [cars] are his only interest.

• Avoid ambiguous reference. Ambiguous reference occurs when a pronoun refers confusingly to two antecedents so that the reader does not know at once which antecedent is meant.
  Ambiguous: When the bowl hit the floor, it shattered.
  Clear: The bowl shattered when it hit the floor.
  Clear: The floor shattered when the bowl fell on it.

• Avoid general reference. General reference occurs when a pronoun refers confusingly to a general idea that is only vaguely expressed.
  General: The boys wore ski boots to their classes which the principal disapproved of.
  Clear: The principal disapproved of the boys’ wearing ski boots to their classes.

• Avoid weak reference. Weak reference occurs when the antecedent has not been expressed but exists only in the writer’s mind.
  Weak: We spent the day aboard a fishing boat, but we didn’t catch a single one.
  Clear: We spent the day aboard a fishing boat, but we didn’t catch a single fish.

Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement
A personal pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, person and gender.

• Use a singular personal pronoun with two or more singular antecedents joined by or nor.
  Neither Lisa nor Amy can find her gloves.
• Use a plural personal pronoun with two or more antecedents joined by and.
  
  Bob and Sally have changed their plans.

• When dealing with pronoun-antecedent agreement, take care not to shift either person or gender.
  
  Jill is studying biology, a course she needs in order to prepare for medical school. Each nation has its own culture, and our nation has its own culture, too.

• When gender is not specified, alternate the examples between the masculine and the feminine include both he/she or rewrite the sentence.
  
  A student should turn in his assignments on time.  
  Students should turn in their assignments on time.  
  A student should turn in his/her assignment on time.

• Use a plural personal pronoun when the antecedent is a plural indefinite pronoun.
  
  Few of the mice had returned to their holes.

• Use a singular personal pronoun when the antecedent is a singular indefinite pronoun.
  
  One of the boys lost his watch.

Sentence Errors: The Fragment, The Run-On & The Awkward Sentence

❖ Sentence Fragments

A fragment is a group of words that is not a complete idea. It usually does not tell who did something, what someone or something did, or what happened. When a fragment is read, it seems as if something is missing. Fragments can be a phrase or a dependent clause.

Fragment Example: Walking at a brisk pace down the road. At once the reader asks, “Who is walking?” The thought is incomplete. To make a fragment a sentence, the writer must complete the thought.

Fred was walking at a brisk pace down the road. This is a sentence because it expresses a complete thought.

❖ Run-on Sentences

A run-on is simply two or more sentences run together because the writer has not punctuated the sentence correctly. This type of error most often occurs when a comma (instead of a period, a semicolon or a conjunction) is used between sentences. A worse, but less common, kind of run-on sentence results from omitting all punctuation between sentences.

Run-on Examples: Tom was late for school, he forgot to set his alarm.  
Tom is late for school he forgot to set his alarm.

Ordinarily, two independent statements are joined to form a single sentence with a conjunction (and, but, or) plus a comma or with a semicolon. If a comma alone is used to join these statements, however, a run-on sentence is the result. Run-ons are corrected as follows:

• By using a subordinating conjunction to show that one idea depends on the other.
  
  Tom was late for school because he forgot to set his alarm.

• By using a conjunctive adverb (sentence connector) preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma to join the ideas.
  
  Tom forgot to set his alarm; therefore, he was late for school.
• By using a semicolon alone.

  Tom forgot to set his alarm; he arrived late for school.

• By dividing the two thoughts into two separate sentences.

  Tom forgot to set his alarm. He arrived late for school.

Awkward Sentences

The awkward sentence, the third type of sentence problem, is produced by a variety of difficulties in composing the sentence, but generally results in writing that is simply difficult to read. See the sections in this handbook dealing with Dangling Modifiers and Parallel Structure for specific examples of the most common and awkward constructions.

Placement of Modifiers

In addition to adjectives and adverbs, phrases can also modify. Often, however, these modifiers are placed in a sentence in such a way that they can cause confusion. The following are rules to cut back on that confusion.

• Place phrase and clause modifiers as near as possible to the words they modify.

  Confusing: I bought a small computer for the accounting staff which gave everyone a great deal of trouble.
  Clear: I bought the accounting staff a small computer which gave everyone a great deal of trouble.

• A modifying phrase or clause must clearly and sensibly modify a word in the sentence. When there is no word that the phrase or clause can sensibly modify, the modifier is said to dangle.

  Dangling Modifier: Carrying a heavy pile of books, her foot caught on the step.
  Correct: Carrying a heavy pile of books, she caught her foot on the steps.
  Correct: While she was carrying a heavy pile of books, her foot caught on the steps.

• A two-way or squinting modifier occurs when a modifying phrase is placed in such a way that it may be taken to modify two words.

  Squinting Modifier: Mary said during the meeting Jo acted like a fool.
  Correct: During the meeting, Mary said Jo acted like a fool.
  Correct: Mary said Jo acted like a fool during the meeting.

Parallel Structure

• Writing should be consistent. Phrases in a series of two or more should be similarly worded.

  Wrong: Going hiking, to bicycle and to camp are my favorite summer activities.
  Right: Hiking, bicycling and camping are my favorite summer activities.

• Tense of verbs must be consistent.

  Wrong: I went to work early, and I see my boss arrive.
  Right: I went to work early, and I saw my boss arrive.

• Ideas in a sentence that are equally important should be expressed in parallel (or similar) grammatical forms:

  Not parallel: Entering the room, Kim began to tap her toes, waved her hands, and jumping to the music.
  Parallel: Entering the room, Kim began tapping her toes, waving her hands, and jumping to the music.

  Not parallel: Swimming, jogging and even a walk are a good forms of exercise.
  Parallel: Swimming, jogging and even walking are good forms of exercise.
Grammar and Punctuation Reference

❖ Abbreviations

- Most abbreviations used in writing refer to proper nouns, so capitalize them.
  
  FBI     EPA     CIA     KZON     IBM     J.F.K.     Washington, D.C.

❖ Apostrophes

- Use an apostrophe to show possession.     Jay's car was a red Camaro.
- Use an apostrophe to take the place of the omitted letter or letters of a contraction.
  
  don't     won't     can't
- Use an apostrophe to form plurals of letters, figures and words referred to as words.
  
  He confuses u's and n's and has left out the and's.

❖ Colons

- Use a colon to introduce a list of appositives that come at the end of a sentence. This mark essentially replaces the words "such as".
  
  In his report, the building inspector cited three main housing-code violations: cracked and falling plaster, broken plumbing and bare electrical wiring.
- A colon cannot follow a verb.
  
  The two topics Mr. McKay refused to discuss were politics and religion.
- Use a colon after the salutation in a business letter.
  
  Dear Sir:        Dear Ms. Taylor:        Gentlemen:
- A colon is used to indicate the separation of time.
  
  School gets out at 2:57 p.m.
  He ran the marathon in 3:26:03.
- Use a colon to introduce a formal quotation.
  
  Thomas Carlyle put it best when he wrote: "Originality is a thing we constantly clamor for and constantly quarrel with."

❖ Commas

- In regular essays, a comma is used to separate Jr., Sr., or Roman numerals from a proper name.
  
  Ken Griffey, Jr.     Thurston Howell, III
- Use commas to separate items in a series.
  
  Every Tom, Dick and Harry has heard the story by now.
  She picked up each melon, smelled it, shook it and then put it back.
  We had no idea who he was, where he came from, or what he wanted.
- Use a comma before the coordinating conjunction that joins two complete sentences.
  
  Amanda leaned back, and the chair tipped over.
  President Grant was honest, but many of his appointees were not.
- Use a comma to set off interrupters in a sentence.
  
  Margot, don't forget, was still locked in the closet.
• Use a comma to set off introductory "yes" and "no," mild exclamations, words of direct address and transitional introductory words such as however, nevertheless, anyway and others.

  Yes, I am going, too.  
  Michael, bring the book with you, please.  
  Nevertheless, Kyle was there when the trouble started.

• Use a comma to set off an appositive.

  Greg also wrote a book, Joey Was a Milkman.

• Use a comma following the closing phrase of all letters.

  Yours truly,  Sincerely yours,  Cordially,

• Use a comma to separate an introductory clause or phrase from a main clause.

  Before she left, the lady told her neighbors what she thought of them.  
  Hoping to get even, we challenged them to another game.

• Use a comma to set off nonrestrictive phrases and clauses (unnecessary to the sentence's essential meaning) from the rest of the sentence.

  That candle, which is on the mantel, hasn't been used in years.

• Use a comma to set off the second and all following items in a date or address.

  The signed affidavits should be sent to Stan's on Kissel Hill, 1501 Pike, Lititz, Pennsylvania, 17603.  
  On September 1, 1987, Debbie Burke went out to buy a newspaper and was never seen again.

• Use a comma to set off a speaker's directly quoted words from the rest of the sentence.

  Then he said, "I am innocent."  
  "I can see," he said sadly, "that you don't believe me."

• Use a comma to set off questions at the end of a sentence.

  You are coming to the game, aren't you?

• Use a comma to indicate an omitted word or words in parallel constructions within a sentence.

  Donna is studying hard; David, hardly at all.

• Use a comma to set off a dependent clause that begins a sentence.

  Since he would not accept the bribe, his integrity remained intact.

• Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives modifying the same noun.

  It was a wonderful, old-fashioned, vine-covered bridge.  
  She had bright, mischievous, laughing brown eyes.

• Use a comma before and after a dependent clause (an incomplete sentence) that comes in the middle of a complete sentence.

  The peaches, although they had been freshly picked, spoiled in the shipment from Georgia.

• Use a comma to set off the one spoken to in direct address.

  "Noah, you're the one in trouble."  
  "Yes, sir, I guess I am."
**Dashes**

- Use a dash much like parentheses. A dash separates a word or phrase that modifies an element in the sentence. However, writing will be smooth and more readable if you use them sparingly. (Note: A dash is two unspaced hyphens—no space before or after it.)

  Enclosed are the contracts—Exhibits A and B.
  Brandon and Michael—both from the South—felt lost in New York City.

**Numbers and Figures**

- In general, write as words all whole numbers from one to nine and use numerals for all numbers 10 and over, but never begin a sentence with a numeral.

  Michael bought four shirts this weekend.

- Use numerals when indicating dates, addresses, percentages, fractions, decimals, scores, statistics, money, divisions of books and plays, pages, identification numbers and the time.

  We celebrated our Bicentennial on July 4, 1976. We won 7 to 3.
  He lives at 24 West 5th St.
  He left nearly 25% of the stock in the warehouse.

- When you have more than one amount in a sentence, use the same form for all amounts.

  He ate eight candy bars yesterday and eleven the day before.
  During the field trip, Steve counted 7 deer, 62 rabbits and 137 birds.

- In discussions involving infrequent use of numbers, you may spell out numbers that can be written in no more than two words and represent other numbers by numerals.

  one  thirty-six  ninety-nine  one hundred  2½  101  1,275

**Parentheses**

- Parentheses are used to set off incidental intrusive material from the main sentence. However, writing will be smoother and more readable if you use them sparingly.

  Joan worked (and she should know better) throughout the night on the report.

**Periods**

- Use a period at the end of sentences that make statements, requests or give commands.

  Mountain View High School is part of the Mesa Unified School District.

- Use periods to indicate ellipses (omission of words from a quotation). At the beginning of a quoted sentence and within a sentence, three spaced periods are used to show an ellipsis.

  Mr. Meyer said, "Tickets . . . will be sold in the office . . . ."

- Use a period after each letter of the abbreviation of the name of a person and some geographical names.


- Use a period after Mr., Mrs. and Ms. but not after Miss or Roman numerals.

- Use periods with lower case abbreviations.

  a.m.  c.o.d.  m.p.h.  r.p.m.
Proper Nouns

- A proper noun names a specific person, place, thing, whereas a common noun names a type of person, place or thing. Always capitalize proper nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Noun</th>
<th>Proper Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the god of war</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td>Grandma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my father</td>
<td>Daddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a lake</td>
<td>Saguaro Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>south of Warner Rd.</td>
<td>a man from the South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college</td>
<td>Penn State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Marks

- Use a question mark after a direct question.
  
  How long do you plan to stay at the football game?

- Do not use a question mark if the statement is truly not a question.
  
  He asked me how long I intended to stay.

Quotation Marks

- Commas and periods are placed inside the quotation marks (as do question marks and exclamation points) when they are part of the question.

- Semicolons and colons go outside the quotation marks unless they are part of the sentence.

- Use quotation marks to enclose someone's exact words.
  
  "Does anyone have a piece of gum?" she asked.
  "I think," he answered, "that Monica has some."
  Who said, "A stitch in time saves nine"?

- Use a single quotation mark when a quotation is enclosed within a quotation.
  
  "Everyone there voted 'nay','" he told me.

Semicolons

- Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses not joined by a conjunction. The two should be clearly related.
  
  Mountain View has nearly 3,000 students; it is a large sized school.

- Use a semicolon to separate the main divisions of a series when commas are also used.
  
  The scores of the teams were Mountain View, 119; Desert Vista, 78 and Westwood, 52.

- Use a semicolon to separate teams and scores in sports reports.
  
  The final score was the Toros, 27; Thunder, 3.

Titles

- Capitalize the first and last words of titles of words. In addition, capitalize significant words of the title, usually nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

  *The Sound and the Fury*
  *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*
• Underline names of books, pamphlets, plays, long poems published as books, newspapers, periodicals (magazines and journals), films, radio and television programs, record albums, ballets, operas, instrumental musical compositions, paintings, works of sculpture, ships, aircraft and spacecraft.

• Use quotation marks for the titles of works published within larger works. Such titles include the names of articles, essays, short stories, short poems, chapters of books, songs, individual episodes of radio and television programs and unpublished works such as speeches and lectures.

The convention of using underlining or quotation marks to indicate titles does not apply to sacred writings (including all books and versions of the Bible), names of series, editions, societies, buildings and monuments.
Works Cited/Works Consulted/Bibliography - (MLA Format)

The key to a correct bibliography/works cited/works consulted is following directions EXACTLY. That means putting the commas and periods in the right place. The correct title choices are **Works Cited**, every document included on the page has been cited in the essay/report; **Works Consulted**, only some of the works are cited, but there are additional ones you used (even if only for background information); **Bibliography**, only used books. Regardless, if you use information from a source, you must give proper credit in your writing.

**General Rules**

1. **Alphabetize** your list by author’s or editor’s last name.
2. If there is no author given for your book or article, use the first main word of the article or book title for alphabetizing.
3. Begin the **first line** of your entry **flush** with the left margin. **Indent second, third, etc.**, lines of each entry.
4. **Double-space** entire page when typing.
5. Abbreviate all months except May, June and July.
6. Write dates in this fashion: number month year. For example, 19 Feb. 1972.
7. If several cities of publication are provided, use the one listed first. If two or more copyright dates are listed, use the most current.
8. If a source is on continuous pages, list the pages from first page-last page (EX: 12-22). If the source is on non-continuous pages, just list the first page and a + sign (EX: 12+).
9. Omit titles, degrees, and affiliations that generally precede or follow names (like Dr. or Ph.D.).
10. Place suffixes--like Jr. or Roman numerals--after given names, preceded by a comma. For example: Rockefeller, John D., IV. or Rust, Arthur George, Jr.
11. If a newspaper does not have the city of publication in the title, such as the *Arizona Republic*, add the city in square brackets if it is well known. EX: [Phoenix] If the city is not well known, add the city and the state.

The following entries are a representation of the most commonly used source citations. Please consult a MLA Handbook for a more complete list.

▶ **Book with One Author or Editor**

Author’s Last Name, First Name. *Title*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Medium of Publication.


▶ **Book with Two or Three Authors or Editors**

First Author’s Last Name, First Name, and Second Author’s First Name Last Name. *Title*. Place of Publication:

Publisher, Date. Medium of Publication.


**NOTE:** If there is an editor instead of an author put ed. after the name of the editor.
❖ **Book with More Than Three Authors**

Use the same format as with a book with two or three authors or use the following:

First author’s last name, first name, et al.  **Title.**  Place of Publication: Publisher, date.  Medium of Publication.


❖ **A Chapter in a Book or a Work in an Anthology**

Author's Last Name, First Name.  "Title of the Chapter or Selection You're Citing."  **Title of Book.**  Ed. Editor's Name.  Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication.  Pages.  Medium of Publication.


**NOTE:**  If no author is given, begin your entry with the title.  Do not put any author information.  Also, if the book has an editor instead of an author, place the abbreviation ed. after the editor's name.

❖ **An Article in a Reference Book (encyclopedia, atlas, etc.)**

Author’s Last Name, First Name.  “Entry Title.”  **Reference Book Title.**  Edition.  Date of Publication.  Medium of Publication.


**NOTE:**  Frequently articles in reference books have no author; if this is the case, begin with the entry title, such as the last example above.

❖ **Articles in Periodicals (magazines and newspapers)**

Author's Last Name, First Name.  "Title of Article."  **Name of Magazine/Newspaper**  Date of Publication:  Pages.  Medium of Publication.


❖ **An Editorial (from the opinion section of the newspaper)**

Author’s Last Name, First Name.  “Title of Editorial.”  Editorial.  **Name of Magazine/Newspaper**  Date of Publication:  Pages.  Medium of Publication.


❖ **Letters (personal, to editors)**

Author’s Last Name, First Name.  Letter.  **Name of Magazine/Newspaper**  Date:  Pages.  Medium of Publication.


**NOTE:**  Thompson’s letter is a letter to the editor; Tanker’s is a personal letter.

**NOTE:**  If the letter has a title, place it in quotation marks after the author’s name, followed by a period, as shown below.

Internet Sources

NOTE: It is necessary to list your date of access because web posting are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. Be sure to include the complete address for the site. Here are some examples: USE ONLY .org .gov .edu SITES!! NO .com or .net SITES ARE ACCEPTABLE!!

A Work Cited Only on the Web

Last Name of author, first name, OR compiler, or editor. “Title of Work.” Title of Overall Web site.

Version/Edition. Publisher or Sponsor, Date of Publication. Medium of Publication. Date of Access.


A Work on the Web, Cited with Print Publication Data (Opposing Viewpoints)

NOTE: If the non periodical work you are citing also appeared in print (i.e. Opposing Viewpoints Essays), you should include the bibliographic data for the print publication as part of your entry.

Author’s Last Name, First name. “Title of Work.” Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Ed. Editor’s Name. Page numbers. Title of Database. Medium of Publication. Date of Access.


An Article in an Online Scholarly Journal

NOTE: Online scholarly journals are treated different from online magazines. First, you must include volume and issue information, when available. Also, some electronic journals and magazines provide paragraph or page numbers; again, include them if available.


An Article from a Periodical Publication in an Online Database (EBSCO)

Note: The original publication information is exactly the same as a print entry. So if an editorial or a letter is printed in a database that entry is completed appropriately.

Author’s Last Name, First Name. “Title of Work.” Original Publication Document. Original Date of Publication: Original Page number(s). Title of Database. Medium of Publication. Date of Access.


Parenthetical Documentation

When you cite information in an essay, it is essential to cite from the original source. This act of documentation is important because it shows that the writer did appropriate research and is not plagiarizing. Any time a writer uses an idea that was not thought of on his/her own, it must be cited. For every citation, there should be a matching entry on a bibliography, works cited or works consulted page. There are two ways to show this documentation:

NOTE: There is no punctuation before the citation or within the citation.

❖ **Option 1**: Place the last name of the author and the page number that the information came from at the end of the idea.

   Example: “Ninety-five percent of professional educators agreed that censorship is unconstitutional” (Cluff 24).

❖ **Option 2**: Include the name of the author and either the title of the article or the author and his credentials as a source and then simply place the page number in parenthesis at the end of the sentence.

   Example: As John Cluff, a researcher at Arizona State University, stated, “Ninety-five percent of educators agreed that censorship is unconstitutional” (24).

Special Documentation Cases

1. Articles with no author – Use first key word in the title and put a page number

   Book (Horizons 5).
   Magazine (“Insurers Pass” 27).

2. Two or three authors

   (Dyer and Foresman 34). (Dwight, Jones, and Noble 18).

3. Four or more authors – Use last name of first author listed

   (Manely et al. 67).

4. Quoting something which was quoted in a source

   Samuel Johnson admitted that Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (qtd. in Boswell 2).
   or
   As stated, Edmund Burke was an “extraordinary man” (Johnson qtd. in Boswell 2).

5. Source with multiple volumes – volume number goes after author’s name

   (Boswell 2: 59). Note: The colon separates volume number and page number.

6. Two sources by the same author – include key word from title after author

   Book (Graham, Witness 34).
   Magazine (Graham, “Listening” 23).

   Note: The comma separates author from title.

7. An author is a company or corporation.

   (American Medical Association 5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commonly Misused Words</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCEPT</td>
<td>Accept is a verb that means “to receive.” I will gladly accept this scholarship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCEPT</td>
<td>Except is usually a preposition that means “to exclude.” All of us can go except Joe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVICE</td>
<td>Advice is a noun and means “opinion about an action.” Mary’s advice saves the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVISE</td>
<td>Advise is a verb and means “to offer advice.” The counselor’s job is to advise students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFECT</td>
<td>Affect is a verb that means “to influence.” Pollution can affect Jake’s asthma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFECT</td>
<td>Effect is a noun that means “the result.” Crime in our community has many effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL READY</td>
<td>All ready means “prepared.” The dancers were all ready to perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALREADY</td>
<td>Already means “previous.” He had already begun to mow the yard when I arrived.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL RIGHT</td>
<td>All right is an adverb that means “satisfactory; average.” Shelly feels like she performed all right in her audition for the spring play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ALRIGHT)</td>
<td>There is no such word as alright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL TOGETHER</td>
<td>All together is used to refer to “everyone in the same place.” The tour group must stay all together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTOGETHER</td>
<td>Altogether is an adverb meaning “entirely.” Mr. Canaday wasn’t altogether pleased with the test scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLUSION</td>
<td>An allusion is a reference to something. The author’s allusion to the Bible confused the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLUSION</td>
<td>An illusion is a false appearance. Addie wanted to give us the illusion that she was rich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ALOT)</td>
<td>A lot is not a word. It should always be written as two words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A LOT</td>
<td>A lot is the nonstandard form of many or much. We were assigned to read a lot of books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLOT</td>
<td>Allot is a verb that means “to distribute by lot, to give or assign.” My class was only allotted six dictionaries to use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTAR</td>
<td>Altar is a noun that refers to “a table or stand in a church or a place for outdoor offerings.” The newly married couple knelt at the altar to pray.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTER</td>
<td>Alter is a verb that means “to change.” Hyram had to have his tuxedo altered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMONG</td>
<td>Among is used for three or more people. The four women chatted among themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETWEEN</td>
<td>Between is used for two people. Share this pie between the two of you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMOUNT</td>
<td>Amount refers to a quality that cannot be counted. I cannot thank you enough for the amount of help you have given me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>Number refers to things that can be counted. I bought a number of new things at the fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAD</td>
<td>Bad is an adjective. She saw a bad movie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BADLY</td>
<td>Badly is an adverb. He acted badly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAKE</td>
<td>Brake refers to the action or object used “to slow down or stop movement.” We had to hit the brakes to avoid the accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Break means “to shatter or smash.” We had to break the window to escape the fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRING</td>
<td>Use bring to carry something from a farther place to a nearer place. Please bring your chairs over here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKE</td>
<td>Use take to carry something from a near place to a farther place. We had to take William to the airport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITAL</td>
<td>Capital as a noun means “the city serving as a seat of government.” Phoenix is the capital of Arizona. As an adjective, it means “punishable by death or of major importance.” Murder is a capital crime in the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITOL</td>
<td>Capitol refers to “the building in which a state legislative body meets.” Our civics class took a field trip to the State Capitol in downtown Phoenix.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHOOSE

Choose (chuz) means “to select or pick.” Choose your words carefully.

CHOOSE

Choose (choz) is the past tense of “to choose.” We chose the colors of purple and silver for the winter dance.

COARSE

Coarse is an adjective that means “rough, crude.” The bus driver’s tone was coarse.

COURSE

Course is a noun that means “path of action; part of a meal; or a series of studies.” Mrs. Snyder’s course in Critical Thinking and Writing is most enlightening.

COMPLEMENT

Complement is “something that completes or makes perfect.” This necklace is the perfect complement for Ashley’s prom dress.

COMPLIMENT

Compliment, as a noun, is “a remark that says something good about a person or thing; and as a verb, is “to say something good.” Anthony complimented Megan on her smile.

CONTINUAL

Continual means “repeated often.” Brandy’s continual research will prove beneficial.

CONTINUOUS

Continuous means “never stopping.” The four days of continuous rain caused flooding.

COUNCIL

A council is “a deliberative assembly,” such as a city council. The city council voted to outlaw smoking in public places.

COUNSEL

Counsel pertains chiefly to “advice and guidance” in general. Our guidance office counsels students about the required course work for graduation.

DESSERT

Dessert (de’sert) is a noun referring to “a usually sweet food served as the last course of a meal.” My favorite dessert is lemon meringue pie.

DESERT

Desert (de’sert) is a verb that means “to forsake or leave; abandon.” The residents were forced to desert their homes because of the approaching forest fire.

ELECT

Elect (el’ekt) is a verb that means “to choose by vote.” America elected a new president.

FARTHER

Farther refers to “actual distance.” He walked farther than I did.

FURTHER

Further refers to “abstract distance.” She talked further about her problem.

FEWER

Fewer refers to “things that can be counted.” Fewer people reserved tickets this year.

LESS

Less refers to collective nouns such as those that cannot be counted. This is perhaps a result of there being less interest in the theatre.

FORMER

Former refers to “the first named of two things.” Please list all of former employers on your application.

LATTER

Latter refers to “the last named of two things.” The basketball team and the football team are both excellent, but only the latter won a State Championship in 1999.

FORMALLY

Formally is the adverb form of formal meaning “the accepted conventions or proper form.” Governor Jane Hull formally introduced Sarah to the audience.

FORMERLY

Formerly is an adverb which means “at a former or prior time; once.” Mr. Thompson formerly served as chair of SIAC.

GOOD / WELL

Good is an adjective. Mary is a good dancer. Well is an adverb. She dances well.

HAVE / OF

A common error occurs when writers use the form should of, would of, could of. The proper form is should have, would have, could have. We should have invited Sam.
Hear is a verb that means “to perceive sound.” *I had to hear the story to believe it.*

Here means “in or at this place.” *How long have you lived here in Mesa?*

Hole refers “to an open or hollow place.” *Make sure you dig the hole deep enough.*

Whole means the “complete amount or sum, entirely.” *I can’t believe I ate the whole pie.*

Imply means “suggest.” *He implied that I needed time off*

Infer means “conclude.” However, *I inferred that he wanted to do the work himself.*

Its is the possessive form of the pronoun it. *The horse injured its hoof.*

It’s is a contraction which means “It is.” *It’s not too late to apply for the scholarship.*

Later is the adverb form of late, which means “after the usual or expected time.” *We arrived at the library later than we expected.*

Latter refers to the last named of two things. *The basketball team and the football team are both excellent, but only the latter won a State Championship in 1999*

Lay (present tense) means “to place something.” Its principal parts are lay, (is) laying, laid, and (have) laid. *Nancee asked me to lay her books on the desk.*

Lie (present tense) means “to recline.” Its principal parts are lie, is lying, lay, and (have) lain. *The nurse told me to lie down for a few minutes.*

Note: Many writers are confused by the past tense of lie, which is the spelled the same as the present tense of lay. *I lay in bed all morning (past tense of lie).*

Lead (lēd) is a verb meaning “to guide, conduct, escort, or direct.” The golden retriever has been trained to lead visually impaired individuals.

Led (lēd) is the past tense and the past participle form of the verb lead. *The firefighter led the family from the burning home.*

Lead (lēd) is a noun referring to “the metallic element, a weight, or the marking substance in a pencil.” *The bookstore sells lead for mechanical pencils.*

Loose (loos) is an adjective that means “not tightly fastened or secured.” *Loose clothing is comfortable to wear in hot weather.*

Lose (looz) is a verb that means “to be unable to find” or “to fail or be defeated.” *We must learn from our mistakes when we lose a game.*

Miner is a noun referring to a person who “extracts minerals from the earth.” *The Lost Dutchman is the tale of a miner in the Superstition Mountains.*

Minor is an adjective which means “lessor or smaller in amount, size, or importance.” *Thomas made a few minor mistakes on his math test.*

Passed is the past tense and past participle of pass (several months passed) or (centuries have passed).

Past is the corresponding adjective (in past centuries), adverb (drove past), and preposition (past midnight).

Peace means “the absence of war or other hostilities.” *The children of war dream of peace when they sleep.*

Piece as a noun means “a unit or element of a larger quantity or class; portion.” *Gary loaned me a piece of paper to do my assignment. Piece as a verb means “to mend or join.” My mother tried to piece the garment back together with remnants of the fabric.*

Personal is an adjective meaning “of a particular person; private or done in person.” *We borrowed a book from Mr. Johnson’s personal collection.*

Personnel is a noun that refers to “the body of persons employed by or active in an organization.” *The personnel working at Mountain View High School is exemplary.*

Note: Personnel is a collective noun and never refers to an individual; therefore it is unacceptable when used with a numeral. It is acceptable, however, to use another qualifying word: A number of armed forces personnel (not six armed forces personnel) testified.
| **PLAIN** | Plain is an adjective that means “not fancy;” also “a flat area of land;” also “clear.” The dessert was plain vanilla ice cream. |
| **PLANE** | Plane is a noun that means “an airplane;” also “a tool;” also “a flat surface.” The plane had to make an emergency landing in the cornfield. |
| **PRECEDE** | Precede means “to be, go, or come ahead or in front of;” also “to surpass in rank, dignity, or importance.” The rough draft precedes the final draft in the writing process. |
| **PROCEED** | Proceed means “to continue after a pause or interruption.” The teacher proceeded to explain the assignment after Simon interrupted with a question. |
| **PRINCIPAL** | Principal refers to “the head of a school;” also “the main one of several things.” Mr. Luketich is the principal at Mountain View High School. |
| **PRINCIPLE** | Principle refers to “a basic truth or a rule of conduct.” Mrs. Parker teaches Principles of English II. |
| **QUIET** | Quiet means “a lack of noise.” The students promised to remain quiet during the test. |
| **QUITE** | Quite means “completely, to a great extent or degree.” I was quite happy with the results. |
| **QUOTE** | Quote is a verb. Never quote someone without citing the source properly. |
| **QUOTATION** | Quotation is a noun. “I have a dream,” is a famous quotation from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech. |
| **RAISE** | Raise is a transitive verb that means “to move something upward.” I raised the curtain. |
| **RISE** | Rise is an intransitive verb that means “to move upward.” I will rise above this problem. |
| **REAL** | Real is an adjective. King Solomon chose the real flowers. |
| **REALLY** | Really is an adverb. Michael really tried to resolve the problem. |
| **RIGHT** | Right means “correct;” also “a just claim or entitlement.” Congratulations! You got the answer right. |
| **WRITE** | Write is a verb means “to put words on paper.” Daphnie had to write an essay for class. |
| **SET** | Set is a transitive verb meaning “to put, to place something.” The principal parts of set are set, (is) setting, set, (have) set. Laura set the glass ornament on the stand. |
| **SIT** | Sit is an intransitive verb meaning “to assume or to be in an upright, sitting position; be seated.” The principal parts of sit are sit, (is sitting), sat, (have) sat. Amanda will sit next to Jim. |
| **SHONE** | Shone is the past and past participle form of the verb shine meaning “to emit light.” While we were at the lake, the sun shone on us the whole day. |
| **SHOWN** | Shown is the past participle form of the verb show meaning “to cause or allow to be seen; display.” The movie was shown in American History to illustrate the Civil War period. |
| **SIGHT** | Sight means the ability to see, a view, or a device use to assist aim by the eye, as on a firearm. Michael’s sight was improved with the latest surgical advancements. |
| **SITE** | Site refers to the place where something was, is, or is to be located. Joanie took us to the site of her new office building. |
| **STATIONARY** | Stationary means “in a fixed position.” The classroom desks are stationary. |
| **STATIONERY** | Stationery refers to “writing paper used to send correspondence.” I received a box of new stationery at Christmas. |
| **THAN** | Than is a conjunction used to introduce the second element or clause of an unequal comparison. I am stronger than she is. |
| **THEN** | Then is an adverb meaning “at that time.” Wear a green hat; then I’ll recognize you. |
| **THERE** | There refers to “a place. We were there at two o’clock. It is also used as an expletive (a word used to get the sentence started). There were four of us going to the dance together. |
| **THEIR** | Their is a possessive pronoun. The pupils bring their own lunches to school. |
| **THEY’RE** | They’re is a contraction meaning “they are.” They’re going with us. |
THREW

Threw is the past tense of the verb throw. *Gabby threw six strikes in the final inning to help her teammates win the softball game.*

THROUGH

Through means “in one side and out another side, in the midst, by way of.” *We turned on the headlights as we drove through the tunnel.*

TO

To is a preposition. *Give the book to me, please.* To is also a part of the infinitive form of a verb. *We will have to leave early.*

TOO

Too is an adverb meaning “also.” *George is a sophomore, too.* Too also means “too much.” *It is too late to go now.*

TWO

Two means “the numerical sum of one plus one.” *We had only two dollars.*

WAIST

Waist refers to “the middle part of the body.” *She wore a wide belt around her waist.*

WASTE

Waste refers to “unused material.” *Please throw your garbage in the wastebasket.* Waste also means “to squander.” *Don’t waste your time.*

WEAK

Weak is an adjective that means “lacking strength.” *Ian was weak after having the flu.*

WEEK

Week is a noun that refers to “any seven consecutive days.” *Martha had to wait a week to get an appointment with the doctor.*

WEAR

Wear means “carry or have on the person.” *Quince must wear glasses to drive.*

WHERE

Where refers to a place, position, source or end. *Where did you park the car?*

WHICH

Which means “being one or ones out of a group.” *Which tie should I wear to the theatre?*

WITCH

Witch refers to “one that is credited with usually malignant supernatural powers.” *Rachel dressed up as a witch on Halloween.*

WHO

Who is used when the nominative (subjective) form is required. *Who left the books here?* Who is the subject of the verb left.

WHOM

Whom is used when the objective form is required. *Whom did Mary call?* Whom is the object of the verb did call.

WHO’S

Who’s is a contraction used in place of “who is or who has.” *Who’s coming tonight?*

WHOSE

Whose is a possessive pronoun. *Whose coat is this?*

YOUR

Your is a possessive pronoun. *Is this your coat?*

YOU’RE

You’re is a contraction used in place of “you are.” *You’re a true friend.*