ENGLISH

**PUNCTUATION**

**Comma Rules**

Use commas if and only if:

1. It separates introductory words from the main part of the sentence.

*After seven hours of playing, Robert gained 5 LP.*

*Over the years, our band has gotten better.*

1. It sets off words or phrases that are nonessential to the integrity of the sentence.

*Benjamin, the worst League of Legends player in our school, got elected president of the League of Legends club.*

This also works if the comma splice is removed.

*Benjamin got elected president of the League of Legends club.*

*James, who plays nothing but Rumble, lost his rank after Rumble got nerfed.*

1. It separates **two independent clauses** with one of the following words: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

*Robert tries really hard to rank up, but he’s still gold.*

*Steve was the best soccer player in his region, so they invited him to try out for the national team.*

**Don’t use a comma if there is an independent and dependent phrase**.

*Mike was the first person on the scene of the accident and tried to help the injured passenger.*

1. It separates words in a list or series.

*For summer camp, they say I need two pairs of pants, bug spray, sunscreen, and a llama.*

*How could you dump me, tell Julie you love her, go to prom with her, and then tell me you love me!*

1. There is a verbal phrase at the send of a sentence, especially one that contains a verb “-ing,” and the phrase refers to the entire sentence, not just the word before it.

*Andrew did well, considering he hadn’t studied at all.*

This also works if the two clauses are swapped.

*Considering he hadn’t studied at all, Andrew did well.*

*Mr. Spare offered rewards to students trying to improve their test scores.*

This is correct, but trying refers to “students” only.

*Mr. Spare offered rewards to students, trying to improve their test scores.*

This is also correct, but trying refers to “Mr. Spare.”

**Semicolon Rules**

Use semicolons if and only if:

1. It separates two independent clauses and you do not see one of the following words: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

*I’m thinking of going to Georgetown; D.C. is an ideal place for me to begin my political career.*

*Steve was the best soccer player in his region; his knuckle-ball free kicks were nothing short of lethal.*

*Benjamin is really bad at League of Legends; he died 21 times last game.*

1. There is thus, furthermore, however, moreover, therefore, or neverthelessbetween **two independent clauses.**

*I like gigantic pickup trucks; however, they’re not practical in New York City.*

*Cats aren’t friendly and often spray on the couch; therefore, I have decided to become a dog person.*

**Colon Rules**

Use colons if and only if:

1. It follows an **independent clause** and introduces an example, explanation, short phrase, or list. The clause that follows the colon does not need to be an independent clause.

*There’s only one champion Brian knows how to play: Nasus.*

*The teacher had only three rules in her class: be on time, sit quietly, and check your attitude at the door.*

**Dash Rules**

Use a dash if and only if:

1. There is a major break or interruption in thought.

*There are three primary issues on the ballot this season – health care, education, and tax reform – so I sure hope changes are coming soon.*

**Apostrophe Rules**

Use an apostrophe if and only if:

1. The word shows possession.

*Richard’s Lee Sin sucks dick.*

**When two nouns possess the same thing, the second noun is given the punctuation, not the first.**

*Joe and Anne’s basement was also destroyed by the flood.*

1. The word is a contraction.

**GRAMMAR**

**Subject-Verb Agreement**

A noun must agree in number with its verb.

*The boy takes the test seriously.*

*The girls take the test seriously.*

*Benjamin, who is really bad at League of Legends, who feeds all day, who misses CS, who never lands skillshots, who loses every game, who fails his flashes, who doesn’t have map awareness, who gets caught all day, ~~are~~ is the president of the League of Legends Club.*

**The pronouns each, -one, -body are singular. Either/or, neither/nor agrees with the noun closest to it. Collective nouns (group, family) are singular. Words that refer to an amount of something is singular (dollars, years, decades); however, words that indicate an amount (percent, fraction, some, all, none) depend on the noun.**

*Each of the people at school ~~dance~~ plays League of Legends like shit.*

*All of the people at school are bad at League of Legends.*

*Everybody at school is bad at League of Legends.*

**Tense Agreement**

*Caitlin tried to teach her mom how to text but didn’t expect her to get it.*

**Pronouns**

Agreement

*When the juniors come to class, we know that not all of ~~you will have your~~ homework done.*

*When the juniors come to class, we know that not all of them will have their homework done.*

Unclear Reference

*When Jeremy and Justin went to the rodeo in Kansas, they met the rodeo clowns and ~~they~~ Jeremy showed them how to rope.*

Reflexive Pronouns

*Tammy and ~~myself~~ I spent the day at the go-cart track.*

*The samurais killed themselves after they ran away from the battle.*

**Modifier Agreement**

*The group of freshmen boys admired their senpais ~~with grins on their faces.~~*

*The group of freshmen boys with grins on their faces admired their senpais.*

**Parallel Structure**

*Tyrone likes to steal, to eat watermelon, and ~~running from the cops~~ to run from the cops.*

**DICTION**

**Misused Verbs**

*Around a child’s first birthday, his awareness of his surroundings suddenly ~~heightens~~ improves.*

**Prepositional Idioms**

*When I met Joan, she was so ~~onto~~ into dance that she wore a tutu to school. Now, she thinks ~~off~~ of dance dancing as little more than something to do on a Saturday night.*

**Commonly Misused Words**

1. Accept/Except

*I recently accepted a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Munich.*

*Except for Harleys, I hate motorcycles.*

Acception isn’t a word, but exception is.

1. Effect/Affect

*As far as the ACT is concerned, effect is never a verb.*

*Richard’s feeding affected his team’s chance of winning.*

1. Fewer/Less

Fewer is for countable things. Less refers to uncountable things.

Fewer also generally modifies plural words, while less modifies singular words.

*You need fewer cherries and less flour.*

*There are ~~less~~ fewer cars on the road.*

1. Then/Then

Then refers to time; than indicates a comparison.

*I picked Varus and then scraped the enemy team.*

*My Varus was better than the enemy team’s Varus.*

1. To/Too/Two
2. It’s/Its

It’s means “it is.” Its is possessive.

*After losing its first game of the tournament to the pinoys, Andes’s team went on to win the next game.*

1. Farther/Further

Farther indicates physical distance. Further indicates level or degree or metaphorical distance.

*Bottom lane is farther from Baron than it is from Dragon.*

*“If you complain any further, I’m not going to gank for you anymore.”*

1. Could/Would/Should/Might

It is “could have,” “would have,” “should have,” and “might have.”

“Could of,” “would of,” “should of,” and “might of” are NEVER correct.

1. Their/They’re/There
2. That/Which

That restricts the meaning or identity of a word. Which indicates a nonessential phrase: it says something about the subject but doesn’t limit its meaning. Clauses using which need to be placed in a comma splice.

*The waterfall that empties into Phelps Lake starts above the tree line.*

*The waterfall, which empties into Phelps Lake, starts above the tree line.*

1. That/Which vs. Who

If the subject is human, that or which is never correct.

*The old man ~~that~~ ~~which~~ who drives the taxi is actually Mr. Outside.*

1. Who/Whom

Who refers to the subject. Whom refers to the object.

*~~Who~~ whom do you want to win the tournament?*

*The painter who did the mural downtown is up for a major award.*

*The painter, whom we contacted to do the mural downtown, is up for a major award.*

1. I/Me

*The guy who dressed up like Shrek and scared the kids was ~~him~~ he.* (He dressed up like Shrek and scared the kids.)

*My brother is as unhappy as ~~me~~ I.* (I am as unhappy as my brother.)

*Tim is happier than ~~him~~ he.* (He is happier than Tim.)

**Adjectives and Adverbs**

*The man’s vision returned gradually, until finally he could see ~~clear~~ clearly enough to make out the horizon.*

*Even though people think it’s easy, in reality it’s difficult to rank up ~~quick~~ quickly.*

**Good is an adjective and well is an adverb. Adjectives modify nouns and adverbs modify verbs.**

*Tiger Woods is good at racking up bitches.* (Good is modifying “Tiger Woods”)

*Tiger Woods racks up bitches really well.* (Well is modifying “racking up bitches”)

**Comparatives and Superlatives**

Comparatives are used when comparing two things. Superlatives are used when comparing more than two things.

*James is worse than Jesse at CS:GO.*

*James is the best worst at CS:GO.*

**Incorrect Conjunctions**

*I can carry, ~~and~~ but I can’t win.*

*I got shitty teammates, ~~but~~ and I started lagging.*

**Imprecise and Redundant Phrasing**

*Andrew came back ~~and returned~~ to school.*