

Reading Comprehension and Language

ASSESSMENT REVIEW

This material is intended as a review. To help prepare for the assessment, the following resources are also available:

Nanaimo ABE Learning Centre: Bldg 205 Rm. 106. Call (250)740-6425 to confirm.

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Reading Comprehension Review

This material is intended as a review only

Reading Comprehension Review

1. Tips to get started:

- Look over the whole piece of writing. Notice its title.
- Notice its length.
- Read the first line of each paragraph to get an idea of how the writer has organized the piece.
- Read the first line of the last paragraph to get an idea of how it may finish.

2. Read with concentration.

Concentrate on the words **AND** the meaning of groups of words. If there are vocabulary words that are unknown to you, read the sentence and try to understand what is meant by the sentence, so that you can guess at the meaning of the word.

3. When concentrating is challenging, try these strategies:

- Read the questions **before** you read the piece. It may help to know what you are looking for!
- Read **out loud**. Your own voice can sometimes focus your mind **AND** eliminate outside distractions.
- Discuss the meaning **as if** you were telling someone else what you think it means. Sometimes having to express your thoughts can clarify them.

4. Practice specific reading skills:

- Recalling details/facts/information
- Understanding main ideas
- Making inferences

Reading Skill: Recalling Details, Facts, and Information

Tips:

- try to **get interested** in the details (readers recall what they are interested in)
- decide what is **most important** and what is probably not worth remembering (you can't remember everything)
- **reread** if you need to
- go back and reread **after** you have read the question

Sample Questions: (answers at the end of each exercise)

1. An adult drinks from one and one half to five, or more, quarts of water a day. Total daily intake depends on climate, workload, body size, and many other factors.

One of the factors that determines the amount of water an adult drinks per day is

- A. state of health
- B. body size
- C. age
- D. gender

2. Most of us think that the water we drink is safe. It usually is, but some of us are using poorly treated drinking water which has been spoiled by bacteria, toxic chemicals, metal, and a possible wide range of other pollutants.

Most of the time our drinking water is

- A. contaminated by bacteria
- B. contaminated by metals
- C. undrinkable
- D. safe to drink

3. At least 4,000 cases of water-borne illnesses occur each year in the U.S.A. The actual total may be ten times greater. Further, medical science has not yet determined the effects on people of long-term exposure to contaminated drinking water.

Medical science does not know

- A. how to protect people from contaminated drinking water
- B. why some drinking water is improperly treated
- C. the long-term effects of unsafe drinking water on people
- D. how much water is required for the average person

Answers: 1. B 2. D 3. C

Read the following and answer the questions:

There are several things that every defensive driver should learn. To begin with, the defensive driver should learn to drive courteously. That is, he should always let the other person have the right-of-way if there is any doubt. Also, the defensive driver should learn to anticipate, or guess, what the other driver is going to do next. This gives him time to get his car into a safer position, if necessary. Furthermore, every defensive driver should learn to give the proper signal before changing directions, allowing enough time for other drivers to react to it. Lastly, every defensive driver should learn to keep a safe distance between his car and the car ahead.

1. A defensive driver is
 - A. courteous
 - B. an aggressive driver
 - C. a slow driver
 - D. a night driver

2. The motto of the defensive driver should be:
 - A. If you drink, don't drive.
 - B. A safe driver is a relaxed driver.
 - C. Safe driving does not just happen; you have to work at it.
 - D. When in doubt, give the other person the right-of-way.

3. A defensive driver
 - A. should learn to anticipate the actions of others
 - B. should maintain a steady speed at all times
 - C. never stops to pick up hitchhikers
 - D. always checks the tires for air pressure

Answers: 1. A 2. D 3. A

Reading Skill: Understanding Main Ideas

The main idea

- is the most important idea in the passage.
- can be found at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the passage.
- may be stated clearly or it may be implied.
- is supported by all the sentences in the passage.

The information in the above section has been adapted from: COMPREHENSION SKILLS: Main Ideas. Jamestown Publishers, 1974. pp.9-18

Sample Questions:

If you, like most people, have trouble recalling the names of those people you have just met, try this. The next time you are introduced, plan to remember the names. Say to yourself, "I'll listen carefully, I'll repeat each person's name to be sure I've got it, and I will remember." You'll discover how effective the technique is and probably recall those names for the rest of your life.

The main idea of this passage maintains that memory

- A. always operates at peak efficiency
- B. breaks down early in the day
- C. improves if new information is used immediately
- D. becomes unreliable when a person is tired

Answers: 1. C Supports are "discover how effective"; "probably recall those names for the rest ..."

Read the following and answer the questions:

It seems that everyone you meet these days knows something about astrology. Go to a party nowadays and chances are that the first stranger you meet will ask you, "What's your sign?" This question comes even before, "What is your name?" The stranger means, of course, "What sign of the zodiac are you born under?" You would answer "Virgo" or "Pisces" or whatever your sign is. But astrology is nothing new. It has been around for thousands of years. In the Orient, it has long been a part of religion and daily life.

1. Which sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph?
 - A. Go to a party nowadays and chances are that the first stranger you meet will ask you, "What's your sign?"
 - B. It has been around for thousands of years.
 - C. It seems that everyone you meet these days knows something about astrology.
 - D. In the Orient, it has long been a part of religion and daily life.

2. The author is most interested in
 - A. the newness of astrology
 - B. the widespread interest in astrology
 - C. the ancient forms of astrology
 - D. the magic of astrology

3. This paragraph could be titled
 - A. What's in a Star?
 - B. Magic in its Many Forms
 - C. Parties
 - D. Religion of the Orient

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. A

Reading Skill: Making Inferences

Sometimes when you are reading you must go beyond the printed word on the page, to what is hinted at or likely to be true, given the set of facts. Inferences can only be made when there are facts to back them.

Example: The old man staggered along the sidewalk, his torn, grey coat flapping in the wind.

You might **infer** that the man is drunk, but really the facts don't substantiate that inference. That would be a guess. It could be that the man has been mugged, that he is sick, or that he has had a medical crisis such as a heart attack. All of these could be the case, or some other explanation may be possible. Unless the facts support the inference, it could be incorrect.

You can make accurate inferences when you:

- think about all the ideas that are presented.
- think about the suggested or implied meaning of the words used.
- ensure they are supported by facts.

The following words in a reading may suggest you need to make an inference:

“implies that ...”

“indicates that ...”

“suggests ...”

“infers that ...”

“seems to be ...”

“probably ...”

“might be described as...”

“can assume that ...”

“can conclude that ...”

Sample Reading and Questions:

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow it.

Of all the farm animals a person might own, the goat is the best personal pet. For one thing, you can keep it for a longer time than other farm animals. Even after a doe is fully-grown and you are milking her, she will remain your pet. She will not lose her love of adventure or her "sense of humour". Goats nose over everything they see and they eat so many different things that people long ago thought that goats ate tin cans. A doe, often called a nanny goat, usually has a single birth. Sometimes, however, twins or even triplets are born. By the time a young kid is five months old, it may be taken from its mother and kept as a pet.

1. The writer implies that most farm animals
 - A. are hard to train
 - B. enjoy being with people
 - C. become independent as they grow older
 - D. like to live with other animals

2. The above paragraph suggests that goats are
 - A. stubborn
 - B. patient
 - C. curious
 - D. intelligent

3. According to the paragraph, the idea that goats can eat tin cans
 - A. is based on a fact
 - B. was argued many years ago
 - C. is untrue
 - D. is certainly possible

Answers:

1. C 2. C 3. C

Sample Reading and Questions:

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow it.

A Daily Record

A diary is a daily personal record. In it the writer is free to record anything at all. This may include events, comments, ideas, reading notes, or any subject on one's mind. Diaries may be kept for various purposes – to record the experiences of one's life so as not to forget them, to record ideas that might prove useful, or simply to express oneself through the medium of the printed word.

In past centuries people in public life often kept diaries. These have become valuable sources of fact and interpretation for later historians. The private candid observations set down in these personal journals often provide truer pictures of an age than do records or other books, which may have been censored during that time. For the most part, these diaries were never intended to be read by others. The entries were made simply as aids to memory or as a form of relaxation.

In modern times, however, politicians and other people realize that their diaries will likely be read by historians or, in published form, by the public. Thus they may make entries with these readers in mind. As a result, their diaries may lose the confidential, intimate nature of the older ones. On the other hand, their entries may tend to be more complete and self-explanatory.

The most famous diary ever written in English was that kept by Samuel Pepys. A civilian official of the British army, Pepys made regular entries between 1660 and 1669. His diary starts at the beginning of the Restoration period in English history and describes many of the court intrigues and scandals of his day. The diary reveals Pepys as a man with many human weaknesses but one who was honest with himself. He wrote his entries in a combined code and shorthand that was not solved until more than 100 years after his death. The most famous diary of the 20th century was published with the simple title Diary of a Young Girl. It was more commonly known as The Diary of Anne Frank. Anne was a young Jewish girl whose diary records the two years her family spent in hiding, mostly in the Netherlands, trying to escape the Nazi persecutors of the Jews. She and her family were finally caught in August 1944. She was imprisoned and died at a concentration camp in Germany in March 1945.

1. A diary is
 - A. a report on world events
 - B. a daily personal record
 - C. a documentary

2. The most famous diary ever written in English was kept by
 - A. Samuel Johnson
 - B. Samuel Pepys
 - C. Anne Frank

3. Diary of a Young Girl was written
 - A. during the civil war
 - B. in the 1940s
 - C. during the 19th century

4. Anne Frank's diary describes
 - A. the years her family spent hiding from the Nazis
 - B. a German concentration camp
 - C. the life of an average young girl

5. Diaries of the past may give a truer picture of an age than published books because
 - A. diaries are uncensored
 - B. published books give only one point of view
 - C. amateur writers were more thorough than professional writers

6. Today's diarists may not be as confidential as those in the past because
 - A. they expect that their diaries will be read by others
 - B. they have more secrets to hide
 - C. people today are harsher critics

7. You may conclude from the article that Samuel Pepys wrote his diary in code and shorthand because
 - A. he was fond of mysteries
 - B. he did not want his diary to be read by the wrong people
 - C. he could not write in proper English

8. It is probable that most people keep diaries in order to
 - A. become famous
 - B. keep personal records
 - C. practice their writing skills

Answers: 1. B 2. B 3. B 4. A
 5. A 6. A 7. B 8. B

The information in the above section has been adapted from: TIMES READINGS PLUS: Book Six. Jamestown Publishers, 1998. pp. 17, 18.

Language Skills Review

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Subjects and Verbs

Subjects

An easy way to find the subject in a sentence is to ask, “Who or what is the sentence about”?

For example, in the sentence “**Most students love the summer semester**”, who or what is the sentence about? **Students**.

(“**Most**” is the adjective that describes the students, but it is **not** the subject of this sentence.)

TIP: Identify all **prepositional phrases**. A prepositional phrase is a group of words in a sentence that begins with a preposition, ends with a noun or a pronoun, and shows a relationship such as time, direction, or location, between the noun and the rest of the sentence. The subject will **not** be in these word groups.

Some examples of prepositional phrases are: *above the water*, *after the races*, *about the story*, *beside the still waters*. In a sentence such as:

- Most students *in the college on the hill* love the summer semester.

“**in the college**” and “**on the hill**” are prepositional phrases. The subject **will not** be in these groups of words.

Verbs

An easy way to find the verb in a sentence is to ask what the sentence says about the subject. What is the *subject doing or being*? For example, in the sentence about the college students (above), what does the sentence say about the students? The students **love**.

If you just had the subject together with the verb, it would make a sentence, though it may not be a very interesting one! For example; **Students love**.

TIP: Another way to find the verb is to place a **subject pronoun** (*I / you / he / she / it / we / they*) in front of the word(s) you **think** is the verb, to see if it sounds right. **They love sounds right, so love is the verb**.

A sentence may have more than one subject and/ or more than one verb.

- Teachers and students met and talked about the activities of the day.

In the above sentence, teachers and students are both subjects. Met and talked are both verbs.

More Verb Tips

A verb is a word or group of words that tell what a person or thing is, does or feels. Another way of defining a verb is that it denotes action, existence or occurrence. The verbs in the sentences below are in **bold**:

- Tom **is** a fascinating speaker.
- Mary **will have been studying** for more than an hour by now.
- Serena **has thought** about changing careers, but she **lacks** self-confidence.

No verb starting with “to” is the verb of the sentence.

- At the end of semester, some classes **like** to go to the pub together to celebrate.

Words such as *always*, *never*, *just*, *not* and *only* are not part of the verb, but may interrupt a two-word verb.

- This course **has** never **included** grammar.

No “ing” word by itself is the verb of the sentence.

- They **are having** dinner at her mother’s house.
 ↑the whole verb

Subject and Verb Practice

Underline the subject(s) and circle the verb(s) in each sentence.

1. Everyone is going to the opening of the play about Carol on Monday.
2. Before the rodeo began, Byron and Avril searched for seats in the gallery.
3. We hugged and stroked the cat to comfort it.
4. Shiona, Linda, Apryl and Isobel have keys to the lab.
5. Unlock the back door.
6. Inching forward in the dark, Craig nearly fell over the cliff.
7. Babies and senators are an odd combination.

Answers

1. Everyone **is going** to the opening of the play about Carol on Monday.
2. Before the rodeo began, Byron and Avril **searched** for seats in the gallery.
3. We **hugged** and **stroked** the cat to comfort it.
4. Shiona, Linda, Apryl and Isobel **have** keys to the lab.
5. **Unlock** the back door.

The subject of this sentence is understood but not written: "You". It is not written because the sentence is a command. The verb is what you are to do (unlock).

6. Inching forward in the dark, Craig nearly **fell** over the cliff.
7. Babies and senators **are** an odd combination.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subjects and verbs in the same sentence need to “agree” with each other in two basic ways.

- If the subject tells about a certain person/people or thing(s), then the verb should tell about the same person/people or thing(s).
- If part of the sentence tells about things happening at a particular *time*, the rest of the sentence should also tell about things happening at *that* time.

Example:

- *All of the people at the ballpark **are enjoying** the game. It **is** an exciting game.*

In the first sentence, the subject is **people**; the verb is **are enjoying** – both are plural (more than one). In the 2nd sentence, **it** is the subject; **is** is the verb. They are both singular (only one). You wouldn’t say, for example: *All of the people at the ballpark is enjoying the game.* You also wouldn’t say: *It are an exciting game.*

Read the following paragraph. Is it correct? If not, can you find the errors?

- *My dog likes to play frisbee. We often go to the park on Sunday and played for hours. I tossed the frisbee and he catches it. He never missed. He is an amazing athlete. Why do you suppose it is that dogs were better at sports than humans?*

This excerpt tells a story about a dog. The first sentence indicates that the story is told in the present tense. Therefore the whole story should be told in the present tense and all the sentences should “agree”. There are several tense errors. Can you spot them?

The corrected story would read:

- *My dog likes to play Frisbee. We often go to the park on Sunday and **play** for hours. I **toss** the frisbee and he catches it. He never **misses**. He is an amazing athlete. Why do you suppose it is that dogs **are** better at sports than humans?*

If any part of the story changes to another tense (e.g. the future), then the following sentences will also follow suit. For example, the above story may continue as follows: **Next Sunday I will be out of town.**

Since **Next Sunday** refers to the future tense, then so should the following sentences. It would be incorrect to say **My dog had to stay with my friend, Judith. Unless Judith is interested in long games of Frisbee, my dog misses me very much.**

Again, can you spot the tense errors in this passage?

Since the first sentence is written in the future tense, the sentences that follow and relate to the introductory sentence should also be written in the future tense:

- My dog **will have to stay** with my friend, Judith. Unless Judith is interested in long games of frisbee, my dog **will miss** me very much.

Subject and Verbs Practice:

Write the correct form of the word in parentheses on practice paper.

1. Since I studied hard for my test, I (were, was) disappointed that I (did, will do) so poorly.
2. Pam took her cats to the vet and (asked, asks) that they be examined for fleas.
3. While we (is, are) using this room, we (were, are) allowed to use the computers.
4. Valerie and Carolyn (cooks, cook) Thai recipes on Sundays because it (will be, is) their favourite food.
5. Christine's job will be posted on the internet and someone (was, will be) hired.
6. She (is, are) circling the form of the verb that correctly (completes, completed) the sentence.

Answers:

1. was; did
2. asked
3. are; are
4. cook; is
5. will be
6. is; completes

Sentence Fragments

A **sentence** is a group of words that has a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought.

A **sentence fragment** is a group of words that does not express a complete thought. There are three types of fragments that may occur in writing:

- Dependent word fragments which cannot stand alone
- ing or to fragments
- Missing subject fragments

Dependent Word Fragments

Sentences that begin with a dependent statement which cannot stand alone must be followed by a statement that would be able to stand alone.

e.g. Because I was so hungry, I ate potato chips for breakfast.

 ↑ ↑

dependent statement **independent** (stands alone)

Some words that commonly begin a dependent statement include:

after	if / even if	until
although /even though/ though	in order that	what / whatever
as	since	whether
because	that / so that	while
before	unless	which / whichever

To correct a fragment caused by starting a sentence with a dependent statement, you must **put a comma** after the dependent statement and **add a stand-alone statement** that begins with a subject and completes the thought.

OR

reverse the statements so the stand-alone sentence is at the beginning and is followed by the dependent statement, without a comma in between.

Here are some examples of dependent statements followed by corrections.

Examples:

- a) Unless tomorrow is sunny
- b) Whenever Mary sings soprano
- c) Even though I started the Spanish class

Corrections:

- a) Unless tomorrow is sunny, **I will stay home.**
Or ... I will stay home unless tomorrow is sunny.
- b) Whenever Mary sings soprano, **people listen.**
Or ... People listen whenever Mary sings soprano.
- c) Even though I started the Spanish class, **I had to drop out before midterms began.**
Or I had to drop out before midterms began even though I started the Spanish class.

Notice that the added statements could be a sentence by themselves. They each contain a subject, and they complete the thought started in the dependent statement.

Notice that when the dependent statement **follows** the stand-alone word group, there is **no comma** between them.

“ing” or “to” Fragments

“ing” words (wishing, listening, having ...) or “to” phrases (to go, to have, to believe ...) sometimes appear near the beginning of a word group. Often this will cause a fragment because there is no subject in the word group. Here are some examples:

- a) Children can have fun on weekends. Crawling under the bed.
- b) When I feel I must do something helpful. To give food to the needy.
- c) I thought about the problem for hours before I spoke. Wondering aloud.
- d) I would give anything to have this wish fulfilled. To have a true love.
- e) Everyone joined hands. Wishing for world peace.
- f) Strong workers were needed. To open the gate.

All of these examples have a sentence that precedes the fragment. The second statement is a fragment because it has no subject. The subject from the first sentence does **not** apply to the second one.

To correct the fragment, add it to the preceding (in front) sentence, or add a subject to the fragment (change the verb to make it agree).

Here are the examples, corrected:

- a) Children have fun on weekends by crawling under the bed.
- b) When I feel I must do something helpful, I give food to the needy.
- c) I thought about the problem for hours before I spoke. I was wondering aloud.
- d) I would give anything to have this wish fulfilled: to have a true love.
- e) Everyone joined hands, wishing for world peace.
- f) Strong workers were needed to open the gate.

Missing Subject Fragments

Sometimes a fragment occurs because the subject is missing. In the following pairs of sentences, the subject is missing from the second group of words:

- a) Pam is organizing most of the handouts. And many of the supplies.
- b) Everyone overate at the wedding. Very fattening.

To correct the fragment, add it to the first sentence to make one sentence or add a subject to the second group of words to make a sentence.

- a) Pam is organizing most of the handouts **and many** of the supplies.
- b) Everyone overate at the wedding. **The food** was very fattening.

Sentence Fragments Practice

Correct the sentence fragments below:

1. Clark is standing at the door. Talking about his novel.
2. Although eating in that restaurant is expensive. We sometimes do because the food is so good.
3. Whenever I feel disheartened. Singing lifts my spirits.

Make a sentence from the following word groups:

4. which she held in her hand
5. after skiing for most of the day
6. to feed the puppy
7. wherever you want to go

ANSWERS: (There are many correct answers. Here are some ...)

1. Clark is standing at the door talking about his novel.
2. Although eating in that restaurant is expensive, we sometimes do because the food is so good.
3. Singing lifts my spirits whenever I feel disheartened.
4. She described the many wild flowers that she held in her hand.
5. After skiing for most of the day, we were exhausted.
6. Feeding the puppy would have made the boy feel better.
7. You will have to spend money wherever you want to go.

Sentence Run-ons

A run-on sentence occurs when two complete thoughts are joined without correct punctuation.

There are two ways this can occur:

- There is a **fused sentence** in which **no punctuation** appears **at all**.
 e.g. Racquel studied math she is doing well.
 Paul has written several books each one is better than the last one.
- A **comma splice** occurs when a **comma is used incorrectly** to separate the two thoughts in the sentence.
 e.g. Everyone is running to get out of the rain, it's coming down in buckets.
 Snow is my favourite weather, I like to make angels.

Ways to Correct a Sentence Run-on

1. Separate the thoughts into two separate sentences and **use a period and a capital letter** to distinguish the two.
 e.g. Racquel studied math. She is doing well.
 Paul has written several books. Each one is better than the last one.
2. Use a **comma** and a **joining word (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)** to connect the two sentences. Choose your joining word carefully so that the sentences connect with the meaning intact.

Hint: Remember “**F A N B O Y S**” (the letters are the first of each of the joining words).

Everyone is running to get out of the rain, for it's coming down in buckets.
 Snow is my favourite weather, and I like to make angels.

3. Use a **semi-colon (;)** to connect the two thoughts, if they are closely related.

Everyone is running to get out of the rain; it's coming down in buckets.
 Snow is my favourite weather; I like to make angels.

Summary of example corrections for a run-on sentence:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Run-on: | My class has 16 people, it is a relatively small class. |
| Correction: | My class has 16 people. <u>I</u> t is a relatively small class. |
| Or: | My class has 16 people, <u>so</u> it is a relatively small class. |
| Or: | My class has 16 people; it is a relatively small class. |

Transitions

Transitional expressions indicate the movement of thought as the writer passes from one topic to another. They help make writing (or thoughts) flow as they link sentences to one another, and they also link paragraphs together. Transition words act like signposts because they inform the reader that one part of the discussion has ended, and they also can give a hint of what will come next.

Here's an example of a paragraph without transition words:

The duckbilled platypus is a very strange animal. Like other mammals, it is warm-blooded. It feeds milk to its babies. The platypus lays eggs instead of giving birth to its young. Its favorite food is earthworms. It is a mammal that behaves like a bird. Many people consider the duckbilled platypus a most unusual creature.

Here's the same paragraph with transition words and phrases added to make the ideas flow smoothly:

The duckbilled platypus is a very strange animal. Like other mammals, it is warm-blooded. **In addition**, it feeds milk to its babies. **On the other hand**, the platypus lays eggs instead of giving birth to its young, **and** its favorite food is earthworms. **In other words**, it is a mammal that behaves like a bird. **For these reasons**, many people consider the duckbilled platypus a most unusual creature.

Transitions Practice

Several signal words and phrases are omitted from the following paragraph. As you read, decide which of the signal words or phrases in the lists below best fits in each numbered space

To join similar details:

also
as well
furthermore
in addition

To connect different details:

but
yet
however
on the other hand

To emphasize similar details :

indeed
in fact
above all
in other words

To summarize:

on the whole
to sum up
in conclusion
for these reasons

Camels are perfectly designed for living in the dry, dusty depths of the desert. Their eyes have long lashes and heavy lids that protect them from blowing sand. ___(1)___, they can close their nostrils against the flying sand of a desert storm. Camels have large, flat, padded feet that help them stay on top of the sand. ___(2)___, these footpads act on sand like snowshoes do on snow, so the camels can move on the sandy surfaces without sinking. ___(3)___ they will eat things no other animal would touch, like the thatched roofs of the desert huts. Camels have extra stomach space for storing water. ___(4)___, they can store up to seven litres so they can get along without drinking for several days. ___(5)___, camels are especially well fitted for their unusual desert life.

Answers: The following are all suitable options:

1. Also, As well, Furthermore, In addition
2. Indeed, In fact, In other words
3. Additionally, Also, Besides that
4. Indeed, In fact, In other words
5. To sum up, In conclusion, For these reasons

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that can “stand-in” for **nouns**.

A pronoun may act:

- as a subject (for example **I, he** or **they**)
- as an object (for example **me, her** or **them**)
- as a possessive (for example **mine, its** or **theirs**)

Subject Pronouns

I, you, he / she / it, we, you, they

Use a subject pronoun:

a) When it replaces a subject noun in a sentence:

- Karen is attending college this year. **She** is attending college this year.

Note: Don't be surprised if this next example sounds awkward!

- Who threw the ball through the window? It was **he**.

b) When it is a subject complement (is the equivalent of the subject noun):

- The runner on the far right was **he**.

c) when it is inserted as a detail or details about the subject noun:

- Two teachers – Shiona and Isobel – are preparing the lab materials for biology.
They are preparing the lab materials for biology.

Hints for selecting the correct pronoun to use in a sentence:

Rewrite the sentence in your head, replacing the subject with a pronoun.

- The first person to leave was **I**. **I** was the first person to leave.

Add in the missing, but understood, verb to complete the sentence after **than** or **as**.

- No one enjoys a party more than **he**. No one enjoys a party more than **he (does)**.

Object Pronouns

<i>me, you, him/her/it, us, you, them</i>

Use an object pronoun:

- a) When it is the object of a verb. Verbs are often action words.
- They were able to help **him**.
 - We took **them** to the movie.
 - I selected Bill and **her**.
 - Sara gave the papers to Mary and **me**.

Hint: In this last example, if you are unsure of which pronoun to use (subject or object), use each by itself in the sentence.

For example, **Sara gave the papers to I**. The subject pronoun “I” doesn't sound correct, so try the object pronoun “me”. **Sara gave the papers to me**. That sounds better, so **Sara gave the papers to Mary and me** is correct.

- b) When it is the object of a preposition. Prepositions are connecting words, such as: *for, at, about, to, before, by, with, of*.
- Activists are always talking *about it*.
 - I decided to line up *behind her*.

Possessive Pronouns

mine, yours, his/her/its, ours, yours, theirs

Possessive pronouns are used to show possession or ownership. These pronouns **never** have an apostrophe.

- Because no one was there to answer the phone, the responsibility was **hers**.

Pronouns Practice

Do the following exercises on rough paper. Check your answers with those at the end to see how you are doing.

A: Using subject pronouns: Replace the underlined word(s) with an appropriate subject pronoun.

1. Mary and Bill will meet at the theatre.
2. Karen, Becky and I are heading to the soccer game.
3. As the dog began to chew the bone, the dog grew restless.
4. Terry and Jim will probably arrive by noon.
5. Carl is waiting for Emil and Lynn.

B. Using object pronouns. Replace the underlined word(s) with an appropriate object pronoun.

1. Carl is waiting for Emil and John.
2. Carl is waiting for Emil and John.
3. Carl is waiting for Emil, John and me.
4. Carl is waiting for myself.
5. Carl is waiting for Lynn.

C: Using object pronouns. Correct the pronoun *if* it is used improperly. Replace it with the correct object pronoun.

1. Lynn is writing a poem to me.
2. Are you voting for Sharon or I?
3. They still need money from Paul and yourself.
4. The teachers told they and me to work in a group together.
5. Finally the sun shone on Raymond, Steve and Brendan.

D: Using possessive pronouns: Fill in the blanks with the correct possessive pronoun.

Note: more than one might fit the sentence.

1. Bill, that study package is _____; this one is _____.
2. All of the raffle winnings go to Lorna and Jeannie. The money is _____.
3. Katie has running shoes in her locker. Those laces must be _____.
4. You are such a great student. That scholarship could well be _____.
5. You can tell which car is _____ by the dent in the fender.

E: Mixed Practice: Select the correct pronoun from the two given.

1. Because tomorrow is Wednesday, Carrie and (I, me) will meet at lunchtime.
2. These bananas must be (his, his').
3. Imelda has so many shoes. I'll bet these are also (her's, hers).
4. Give the money to (we, us) before we get into trouble.
5. Give the money to (they, them) before I get into hot water.
6. I have always had more than (he, him).
7. Slowly we turned around to find cold eyes staring at Pam and (I, me).
8. When Raymond returns from the library, this desk will be (his', his).

Answers for Pronoun Exercises

A: Using subject pronouns	B: Using object pronouns
1. She	6. him
2. We	7. them
3. it	8. us
4. They	9. me
5. He	10. her

C: Using object pronouns	D: Using possessive pronouns
1. correct	6. yours, mine / his / hers
2. me	7. theirs
3. you	8. hers
4. us	9. yours
5. them	10. mine, his, hers, theirs,

E: Mixed Practice	
1. I	5. them
2. his	6. he
3. hers	7. me
4. us	8. his

Capital Letters

Capital letters are needed for:

1. The first word of every sentence
2. The first word of every direct quotation
 - He said, "We've jogged two miles."
 - "We've jogged two miles," he said, "and I feel great." (The *and* is not capitalized because it does not begin a new sentence.)
 - "We've jogged two miles," he said. "It makes me feel great." (*It* is capitalized because it begins a new sentence.)
3. The first, last, and very important word/s in a title
 - I've been reading Bulfinch's The Age of Fable.
4. proper names of people, places, languages, races and nationalities

Grandfather Brown	Japan	Oriental
Uganda	English	Indian
5. A title of relationship if it takes the place of the person's name, but not otherwise. If my (or similar word) is in front of the word, a capital is not used.
 - I think Mother wrote to her.
 - I think my mother wrote to her.
6. Names of particular people or things, but not general ones
 - I spoke to Professor Smith.
 - I spoke to the professor.
7. Names of months, days of the week, and special days, but not the seasons

February	First of July	but	spring
Wednesday	Thanksgiving		summer

Exercises

1. I discussed the matter with my professor.
2. We were studying Robert Frost's poem "The death of the hired man".
3. All grade 12 students take history and english.
4. Usually college classes begin the day after labour day.
5. You know, dad, I haven't had the car all week.
6. He shouted, "what's happening?"
7. The doctor sent her to the hospital last wednesday.
8. After graduating from high school, he went to Vancouver island university.
9. My aunt is president of her club this fall.
10. My cousin plays hockey for simon fraser university.

Answers

1. Correct
2. "The Death of the Hired Man"
3. English
4. Labour Day
5. Dad
6. What's
7. Wednesday
8. Vancouver Island University
9. Correct
10. Simon Fraser University

Apostrophes

These punctuation marks are used in two situations:

- in contractions
- to show ownership

In Contractions

A contraction results when two words are combined together to make one word.

have + not = haven't

I + will = I'll

who + is = who's

Here is a list of other commonly used contractions:

I + am = I'm

it + has = it's

I + have = I've

is + not = isn't

I + had = I'd

could + not = couldn't

do + not = don't

I + would = I'd

did + not = didn't

they + are = they're

it + is = it's

we + will = we'll

To Show Ownership

- the jacket that belongs to Ruth **Ruth's** jacket
- the paws of the dog the **dog's** paws

When a **singular word or name ends in "s"**, just **add an apostrophe** after the **"s"** to show possession.

James' book Iris' desk Ferris' day off

When a **plural word ends in "s"**, show possession by **adding an apostrophe after the "s"**.

College **instructors'** cars are often old.

Many **students'** lockers were raided.

All of the **soldiers'** rations were spoiled.

Note: **No** apostrophe is used with possessive pronouns such as:

hers, his, its, theirs, yours, ours

Note: For plural words, just add an “s” to the word, but **don’t add an apostrophe.**

His book is ruined. His **books** are ruined.

Note: Some words are already plural in an unusual form. **Add an apostrophe plus “s”.**

children’s toys, men’s clothes, women’s work

Example

- Hes been going to school for months, but Tonys marks are still better than his.

Added Apostrophes:

- **He’s** been going to school for months, but **Tony’s** marks are still better than his.

The meaning of the sentence:

- **He has** been going to school for more than one month, but **the marks Tony has** are better than his marks.

Apostrophe Practice: Add an apostrophe where needed. Write the meaning of the sentence.

1. Weve been working on Davids car for days.
2. Todays leftovers will go to Iris dogs.
3. Most dogs breath is smelly.
4. Theyre ready to clean Phyllis moms bedrooms.
5. Heres a long list of students complaints about Mondays meeting.

Answers:

1. **We've** been working on **David's** car for days.

We have been working for more than one day on **the car David owns**.

2. **Today's** leftovers will go to **Iris'** dogs.

The leftovers that **belong to today** will go to **the dogs that belong to Iris**.

3. Most **dogs'** breath is smelly.

The breath that **belongs to most dogs** is smelly.

4. **They're** ready to clean **Phyllis' mom's** bedrooms.

They are ready to clean more than one of the bedrooms that **belong to the mom of Phyllis**.

5. **Here's** a long list of **students'** complaints about **Monday's** meeting.

Here is a long list of the complaints **that came from (or belong to) the students** about the meeting that was on Monday (**belonging to Monday**).

Commas

1. Use a comma before these joining words when you are constructing a compound sentence. (Hint: Remember the word formed downward by the first letters of each joining word.)

F o r
A n d
N o r
B u t
O r
Y e t
S o

In the examples following, underlined spaces indicate that a comma is needed.

e.g. I want to go but you want to stay.
He died before she was born so she never knew him.

2. Put a comma between items in a series.
- The sting of a bee wasp or hornet can cause a severe reaction.
 - Soon the students will return the halls will be buzzing and the studying will begin.
3. A comma goes after an introductory expression or before an expression that follows the sentence but is somewhat separated from the rest of the sentence (doesn't flow easily into the sentence).
- Well I haven't seen anyone yet.
 - When the time comes we will be ready.
 - It's tiring to go to school all day isn't it?
4. Put commas around the name of a person spoken to or addressed.
- Rick bring that into the classroom.
 - I know Jan that you are missing your family.
5. Put commas around an expression that interrupts the flow of the sentence.
- The facts therefore do not support your argument.
 - I wish however that I could go south for the weekend.

6. Put commas around non-essential material.

- The students ___ who passed with flying colours ___ headed to La Cantina.
- Cannery Row ___ a novel by John Steinbeck ___ is a favourite among English instructors.

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks are used:

- to identify the exact words of the speaker
- to set off the titles of short works of writing

To identify the exact words of the speaker:

1. **Start** the quotation **with a capital letter**. He screamed, "**G**et lost!"
2. If the quotation is **split into 2 parts**, the 2nd part does not begin with a capital letter unless it begins a 2nd sentence.

"Would you please," he said, "just get lost!"

"Get lost," he said. "I've had enough."

Note: *A comma follows the end of the 1st part of the quotation.
A comma precedes the 2nd part of the quotation, unless a new sentence is begun.*

3. Use quotation marks (" ") **to start and end the quoted part** of the sentence.

As the wise one always says, "Love heals all problems."

4. Commas, periods, question marks, exclamation points that come at the end of a quotation should go **inside** the quotation marks.

Carol questioned, "Aren't you coming?"

5. If the words are **not the speaker's exact words**, do not use quotation marks.

*He said **that he was willing to go**. He said, "I am willing to go."*

*Bill told them **he could do it**. Bill told them, "I can do it."*

To set off the titles of short works of writing:

Use Quotation Marks

- the song, *"Isn't it a Pity?"*
- the episode of Cheers, *"Diane's Worst Day"*
- the article, *"Does Money Really Count?"*

Use Underlines

- on the album(longer work), All Things Must Pass
- the television show, Cheers
- the magazine, Lifestyles

Note: Usually the quotation marks **within** other quotation marks are reduced to 1 (') instead of 2 (") to distinguish them from one another.

Quotation Marks Practice

Insert the quotation marks where needed. Correct any punctuation that may need to be altered.

1. He read an article called Finding Answers on the Internet to the group, and then he turned to the class and said do you believe that.
2. You must listen to her the lawyer shouted. She wrote an article called Legal Practice in B.C. about courts. She knows her stuff.
3. Did you really believe that another day of waiting would make it easier to give that speech, asked her friend. It is still called the hazards of not preparing for public speaking and it is still the most popular speech in the text called speeches for notoriety.

Answers:

1. He read an article called "Finding Answers on the Internet" to the group, and then he turned to the class and said, "Do you believe that?"
2. "You must listen to her!" the lawyer shouted. "She wrote an article called 'Legal Practice in B.C.' about courts. She knows her stuff."
3. "Did you really believe that another day of waiting would make it easier to give that speech?" asked her friend. "It is still called 'The Hazards of Not Preparing for Public Speaking', and it is still the most popular speech in the text called Speeches for Notoriety."

Other Punctuation

Semicolons ;

1. Use a semicolon to join two independent (stand alone) statements which are **closely related**. The statements should be closely related enough that you **could** use a FANBOYS word (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) instead of a semicolon.
 - My daughter was quite sick; I called the doctor right away.
2. Use between independent statements linked with a transitional phrase or word. Put a comma after the transition word or phrase.

- I am nervous about the test; however, I know I have prepared as well as possible.
- Gary did not want to leave the party; nevertheless, it was getting very late.

Note: If a FANBOYS word (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) connects the two statements, use a comma instead of a semicolon.

- Gary did not want to leave the party, **but** it was getting very late.

3. Use between items in a series that contains internal punctuation:

- Strategies for staying healthy include eating well, to ensure proper nutrition; exercising regularly, to maintain heart health; and living a balanced lifestyle, to reduce stress.

In the above sentence, the three different examples contain commas as internal punctuation. Without the semicolons, the reader could have difficulty sorting out the idea groups.

Colons :

1. Use a colon after an independent statement to signal a list:

- He had several chores to do on Saturday: washing the car, picking up groceries, and paying the bills.

Note: If you introduce the list with “including”, “such as”, or “for example”, do **not** use a colon.

- He had several jobs to do on Saturday, including washing the car, picking up groceries, and paying the bills.

2. Use a colon to start a quotation that has been formally introduced with a **full statement**.

- Consider my father’s advice: “If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.”

If the quotation begins with a **short** expression such as “he said”, then use a comma.

- My friend said, “You should listen to your father’s advice.”

3. Use a colon between independent statements if the second one **summarizes** or **explains** the first.

- The children were whining and fussing: it was well past their bedtime.

4. Use a colon after the greeting in a formal letter, to indicate hours and minutes, to show a ratio, or between the title and subtitle of a book:

- Dear Sir:
- 8:30 a.m.
- The ratio of adults to children was 3:1.
- Student Success: How to Thrive at University

Dash –

1. Use a dash to set off material for emphasis.

- Everything she wanted to eat—from cake to chocolate—was loaded with sugar.

2. Use a dash to signal a list. A colon could also be used, but a dash is less formal.

- He had everything he needed to study—his textbooks, his notes, and his coffee machine.

3. Use a dash to signal a big shift in thought or tone.

- Gerry tried to be patient with his sister—and failed.

Do not overuse the dash, as it can create a choppy effect.

Ellipsis Mark ...

1. Use an ellipsis mark to show you have deleted words from a direct quote.
 - The research reports that “even those who start the medication after the second stage ... notice significant improvement.”
2. Use an ellipsis mark to show an interruption in speech, or to suggest hesitation or unfinished thought.
 - As the car drove off, Angie yelled “Don’t forget I’ll always...”