



Mastery of English Grammar and Mechanics™

An Individualized Program



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MASTERY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

Introduction

Mastery of English Grammar and Mechanics is a program which allows students to work at their own pace and on their weaknesses. Once the diagnostic test is graded, an individual lesson, which concentrates on one specific area, is then given to each and every student. Although there are no perfect rules for determining whether a student fully understands a concept, this diagnostic test may help. We recommend an 80% grade in each section for students to grasp the material [4 correct out of 5 or 8 correct out of 10]. Obviously, each teacher is free to set his or her own standards. Answer keys for each unit are supplied and work in conjunction with each section to facilitate scoring.

MASTERY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

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Lesson One: A Few Simple Rules for Capitalizing Words

Here are a few simple rules for capitalization. They do not cover every instance in which a capital letter should be used, but they do cover most.

1. Always capitalize the letter “I” when it is used to refer to yourself.
2. Always capitalize the first word in each sentence.
3. Always capitalize the first word in a direct quote.

WRONG: *The manager said, “shut up or get out.”*

RIGHT: *The manager said, “Shut up or get out.”*

When a quote is broken, the second part is not capitalized unless it is a new sentence.

WRONG: *“Let’s not,” he stated, “Make any quick decisions.”*

RIGHT: *“Let’s not,” he stated, “make any quick decisions.”*

4. Capitalize a person’s name (or initials) and any title that comes before the name.

WRONG: *At that point, senator h. b. Jones and doctor joyce ray entered the room.*

RIGHT: *At that point, Senator H.B. Jones and Doctor Joyce Ray entered the room.*

5. Always capitalize the days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) and the months of the year (January, February, March, etc.); however, do not capitalize the seasons (fall, winter, spring, summer).

WRONG: *His birthday is friday, october 2, but mine is in the Summer.*

RIGHT: *His birthday is Friday, October 2, but mine is in the summer.*

6. Always capitalize the names of races, nationalities, languages, and religions. For example—African-American, Caucasian, Spanish, Irish, Methodist, Catholic.

WRONG: *The african-american was a baptist, and the spaniard was a catholic.*

RIGHT: *The African-American was a Baptist, and the Spaniard was a Catholic.*

7. Capitalize words referring to the Deity—God, the Savior, the Lord, Jehovah, Allah.

8. Always capitalize geographical areas (the North, the South) but not directions.

WRONG: *He found the pace of life slower in the south than in the north.*

RIGHT: *He found the pace of life slower in the South than in the North.*

WRONG: *He was traveling South on the interstate.*

RIGHT: *He was traveling south on the interstate.*

9. Always capitalize the first word and other important words in the name of a book, play, poem, or song. Do not capitalize unimportant words—in, on, the, for, at, etc.

Lesson Two: A Few Simple Rules on Punctuation

These rules do not cover every point of punctuation; however, if you master them, you will be well on your way to using punctuation correctly.

1. Use a *period* (.) at the end of a declarative sentence and after abbreviations and initials.

Ex. *Red is my favorite color.*
Dr., Co., H. L. Jones

Note: Two-letter state abbreviations do not use periods and are written as two capital letters with no space between the letters.

Ex. *NJ, DE*

2. If a sentence asks a question, use a *question mark* (?) at the end. *Exclamation marks* (!) are used to show great surprise, urgency, or strong feeling.

Ex. *Where are you going?*
Help!

3. Use a *comma* (,) to separate words or phrases in a series.

Ex. *He bought eggs, milk, bread, and a paper.*
The gas entered the house through the open window, through the crack under the door, and down the open chimney.

4. Use a comma to separate an appositive. (An *appositive* is a word or phrase that repeats the noun directly before it.)

Ex. *George Washington, **our first president**, is a hero for all of us.*
*That book, **Hamlet**, belongs to me.*
*Curling, **the game that involves brooms and ice**, is one of my favorites.*

5. Use a comma in dates where you have three or more items together.

Ex. *The allies invaded Europe on June 6, 1944.*

Note: With two items, no comma is required, but one may sometimes be used.

Ex. *October 16 was the day to remember.*

6. Use a comma to separate three items in an address, and/or to separate a city from a state.

Ex. *He lived at 21 Main St., Denver, Colorado.*
He lives in Denver, Colorado, but he is moving to Bradford, Florida, next month.

7. Use a comma to set off an introductory clause. (The sentence will usually begin with the word *since, because, as, although, if, when*, or a similar word.)

Ex. **Because** *he was going to be late, he took a key with him.*
Since *it had stopped raining, she no longer needed an umbrella.*

Lesson Three: Six Points to Remember When Using Quotation Marks

1. An *indirect quote* does not use quotation marks. (Indirect quotes are not someone's exact words. They frequently begin the word "that.")

Ex. *Ronald said that he disliked you.*
The mayor shouted that he would not be kicked around.
Alvin replied he was late. (The word "that" is not stated, but it is implied.)
Keisha's exact words were not, "[I]f her mom would pick her up."

Direct quotes need quotation marks around the quoted statement. (Note the change in person in the pronouns.)

Ex. *Ronald said, "I dislike you."*
The mayor shouted, "I will not be kicked around."
Alvin replied, "I am late."
Keisha wondered, "Will mom pick me up?"

2. The first word of a quote is always capitalized.

Ex. *The captain yelled, "Man the lifeboats!"*
"Man the lifeboats!" yelled the captain.

The second part of a split quotation, however, is not capitalized.

Ex. *"I will," the masked man said, "fight for truth, liberty and justice."*

3. Notice that the part of the sentence which is not written within the quotation marks is set off with commas. If the quotation is a split quotation, the stating phrase has a comma before and after it.

Ex. *"Our main goal," the agent stated, "is to undermine the power of the dictator."*

4. Put a question mark inside the quotation marks if the direct quote is asking a question.

Ex. *"Who has a dollar?" Jane asked.*

Put an exclamation point inside the quotation marks if the direct quote is an exclamation.

Ex. *"I won a million dollars!" my father shouted.*

Note: Because of the question mark and exclamation point, no comma is needed at the end of the quote.

5. You need to place quotation marks around the titles of short stories, poems, and songs.

Ex. *In class we read Poe's story called "William Wilson," and for homework, we had to read his poem titled "The Bells."*

Remember: The titles of books are not put in quotation marks; they are underlined or italicized.

Ex. *He lost his copy of Oliver Twist.*

Lesson Four: Forming the Plural of Nouns

1. Most nouns form their plurals by simply adding an “s.”

Singular		Plural
<i>boat</i>	+ s =	<i>boats</i>
<i>lawyer</i>	+ s =	<i>lawyers</i>
<i>germ</i>	+ s =	<i>germs</i>
<i>judge</i>	+ s =	<i>judges</i>
<i>cow</i>	+ s =	<i>cows</i>
<i>job</i>	+ s =	<i>jobs</i>

A number of other nouns, however, form their plurals differently. If you can remember these differences, your spelling will improve greatly.

2. The plurals of nouns ending in “s,” “sh,” “ch,” “x,” and “z” are formed by adding “es.”

Singular		Plural
<i>box</i>	+ es =	<i>boxes</i>
<i>class</i>	+ es =	<i>classes</i>
<i>ditch</i>	+ es =	<i>ditches</i>
<i>flash</i>	+ es =	<i>flashes</i>
<i>fizz</i>	+ es =	<i>fizzes</i>

3. Nouns ending in “y” preceded by a consonant form their plurals by changing the “y” to “i” and adding “es.”

Singular		Plural
<i>city</i>	change y to i + es =	<i>cities</i>
<i>baby</i>	change y to i + es =	<i>babies</i>
<i>company</i>	change y to i + es =	<i>companies</i>

4. For nouns ending in “y” preceded by a vowel (a, e, i, o, u), simply add an “s” to form their plurals.

Singular		Plural
<i>toy</i>	+ s =	<i>toys</i>
<i>monkey</i>	+ s =	<i>monkeys</i>
<i>day</i>	+ s =	<i>days</i>
<i>buy</i>	+ s =	<i>buys</i>

5. Most nouns ending in “o” add an “s” to form their plurals,

Singular		Plural
<i>rodeo</i>	+ s =	<i>rodeos</i>
<i>radio</i>	+ s =	<i>radios</i>
<i>duo</i>	+ s =	<i>duos</i>
<i>trio</i>	+ s =	<i>trios</i>
<i>piano</i>	+ s =	<i>pianos</i>
<i>solo</i>	+ s =	<i>solos</i>
<i>auto</i>	+ s =	<i>autos</i>

Lesson Five: Apostrophes to Show Possession

1. The most common use of the apostrophe is to form the possessive case of nouns.

Ex. *The boy's boat.* (means "The boat belongs to the boy.")

2. The possessive case of singular nouns which do not end in "s" is formed by adding an apostrophe and an "s" to the end of the word.

Noun

the coat of the boy
the face of the man
the pen of the woman

Possessive

the boy's coat
the man's face
the woman's pen

3. The possessive case of plural nouns or of nouns which end in "s" is formed by adding just the apostrophe to the end of the word.

Noun

the windows have a glare
the hats of the girls
nests belonging to the birds
the handles of the axes

Possessive

the windows' glare
the girls' hats
the birds' nest
the axes' handles

Note to the Teacher: We realize that some style guides separate this rule into two sections [Dickens's, business's, Moses', octopus' as examples], but for the sake of consistency and the grade level of this booklet, we have decided to use only the one rule.

4. The possessive case of plural nouns that do not end in "s" is formed by adding an apostrophe and an "s" directly to the noun.

Noun

the pictures of the men
the boots of the children

Possessive

the men's pictures
the children's boots

Lesson Six: Parts of Speech

A *noun* is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. Nouns may be classified as *common*, *proper*, *abstract*, or *collective*.

Common nouns name a class of persons, places, or things. They are not specific, and they are not capitalized.

Ex. *actor, country, holiday, mountain, celebration, etc.*

Proper nouns name specific persons, places, events, or things and must be capitalized.

Ex. *Tom Cruise, France, Thanksgiving, California, etc.*

Abstract nouns name abstract ideas and qualities.

Ex. *loyalty, love, freedom, faith, hatred, patriotism, etc.*

Collective nouns name groups of persons, animals, or things.

Ex. *flock, family, army, crowd, bunch, etc.*

A *pronoun* is a word used in place of a noun.

Ex. *John is late; **he** is always late.
The train is on time; **it** is always on time.*

Pronouns are classified as *personal*, *demonstrative*, *interrogative*, *possessive*, *reflexive*, or *relative*. Explanations and examples of these different types of pronouns follow.

Personal pronouns refer to persons or things.

Ex. *I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, we, us, they, them
I gave the message to **her** early in the morning.
The fog was gone; **it** had lasted all night.*

Demonstrative pronouns are used to identify specific nouns without naming them.

Ex. *this, that, these, those
I want **those**.
Those flowers were picked from a garden in the early morning.*

Interrogative pronouns are used in questions.

Ex. *who, which, what, whom, whose
Which student won the \$10,000 scholarship?
Whose sweater is this?
What did you say?*

Lesson Seven: Subjects and Predicates

1. The *subject* of the sentence is a word, phrase, or clause which identifies the performer of the action. It is the topic, the thing, the person which the sentence is about.

Ex. **Tom** threw the ball. (*Tom* is a noun, the performer of the action.)
The poor runner collapsed from exhaustion. (*The poor runner* is a noun phrase performing the action. *Runner* is the subject noun.)

The noun in the subject is called the *simple subject*. In our exercises, it is the simple subject we will ask you to identify.

2. Although in most sentences the subject begins the sentence, sometimes the subject will follow an introductory phrase or clause.

Ex. *In the afternoon*, **I** usually take a nap.

3. In *interrogative sentences* (questions), the subject often comes after part of the verb.

Ex. Did **you** eat your peas?

4. In many *imperative* or *exclamatory sentences* (direct commands), the subject is often not expressed, but is *understood* to be “you.”

Ex. Eat your peas.
(You) eat your peas.

5. In sentences using *passive voice*, the subject is the receiver of the action rather than the performer, but it is still the topic or focus of the sentence.

Ex. **Bill** was hit by the ball. (*Bill* is the subject.)

6. When searching for the simple subject, first cross out all prepositional phrases. The simple subject is *never* in a prepositional phrase. Remembering this rule will eliminate many problems in identification of subjects it will also help your writing.

Ex. ~~*In the morning*~~ ~~*one of the sailors*~~ got sick. (The subject is *one*, not sailors.)
~~*One student*~~ ~~*in all grades*~~ can attend. (The subject is *student*, not grades.)

7. The *predicate* of the sentence is everything in the sentence that is not the subject or part of the subject. It contains the verb and its modifiers and complements.

Ex. Simon **cried**. (verb)
Christine **hugged Paul**. (verb, direct object)
John **gave Sue the ring**. (verb, indirect object, direct object)
The rocket **exploded** on the launching pad. (verb, prepositional phrase)

The verb, with any helping verbs, is called the *simple predicate*. We have circled the simple subject and underlined the simple predicate.

Ex. *In the morning*, Frank will give you the details.
Many of the members of the soccer team were honored for their work for charities.