

Top Grammar Issues	Quick tip	Reference (add the page # of a text or a resource)
Subject Verb Agreement	Singular subjects need singular verbs, and plural subjects need plural verbs. ( <i>He runs. They run</i> )	
Fragments and Run Ons	Fragments are incomplete sentences. Usually correct them by removing the period and adding or connecting the main clause. Run-ons are two independent clauses which are joined together with no connecting word or punctuation to separate the clauses. Usually correct by adding in punctuation.	
Parrallel structure	Use the same pattern of words. Errors occur most often in a series. Check that all words <u>are</u> the same tense, <u>have</u> the same ending, or <u>follow</u> the same pattern.	
Active and passive voice	Active voice is preferred. In active voice the subject performs the action. ( <i>The dog bit the man.</i> ) In passive voice the action is performed on the subject. ( <i>The man was bit by the dog.</i> )	
Tense Shifts	Do not change tense forms.	
Misplaced/ dangling modifier	Modifiers should come next to the word they modify (refer to) ( <i>INCORRECT: Screaming all the way, the roller coaster thrilled us.</i> ) Reads as if the roller coaster is screaming.	
Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe	For possession, add 's or just an apostrophe if the word ends in s ( <i>That is Jim's bag. That is Ross' bag</i> )	
Vague pronoun reference	Pronouns (she, yourself, her, he, it, they, who, etc.) need to be clear about the word or words they are replacing. ( <i>INCORRECT: The restaurant prohibited smoking, which many customers resented.</i> ) Do the customers resent the restaurant or smoking?	
Comma after introductory element	Use a comma after an introductory phrase. ( <i>Determined to pass the test, we studied all night.</i> )	
Comma in a compound sentence	Compound sentences have two or more parts that can stand as their own sentences. If they are joined by a conjunction (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) the use a comma before the conjunction.	
Comma with a nonrestrictive element	A nonrestrictive element is one that is not necessary to make basic meaning in a sentence. When these appear, use commas before and after. ( <i>John, who was a culinary student, prepared us a meal.</i> )	
Comma splice	When a comma acts as end punctuation basically making a run on sentence.	
Comma in a series	Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses written in a series.	
		<a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu">http://owl.english.purdue.edu</a>

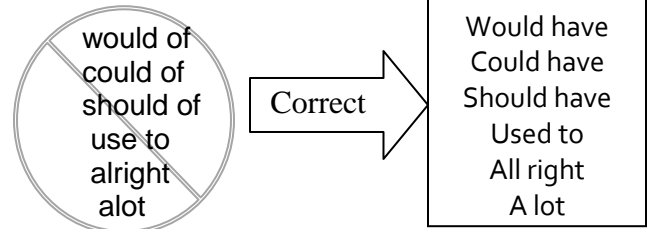
REMOVE	CONDENSE for conciseness	
In my personal opinion	<i>Instead of writing...</i>	<i>Write....</i>
As far as I'm concerned	is able to	can
In this paper I intend to	has the ability to	can
I would like to say that	due to the fact	because
I think	for the reason that	because
I believe	this is why	because
I suppose	at all times	always
On the subject of	in spite of the fact that	though
In regards to	call your attention to the fact that	Remind you
As far as...	the question as to whether	whether
It should be noted that	the reason why is that	because
<b>TRY TO AVOID (add your own words to this list)</b>		
There are (is, were, was)		
Very		
A lot		
So		

**It's** = *it is*   **Its** = *possessive*  
**Who's** = *who is*   **Whose** = *possessive*  
**To** = *preposition*   **Too** = *also, excessive*  
**You're** = *you are*   **Your** = *possessive*  
**They're** = *they are*   **Their** = *possessive*   **There** = *place, abstract*  
**Then** = *time*   **Than** = *comparison*

100 Commonly Misspelled Words			
Absence	Discipline	Harass	Neighbor
Acceptable	Effect	Height	Necessary
Accidentally	Eighth	Heroes	Occasionally
Accommodate	Eliminate	Hoping	Occurrence
Amateur	Embarrass	Humorous	Perseverance
Argument	Emphasize	Immediately	Personnel
Achieve	Encouragement	Intelligence	Practically
Appropriate	Environment	Interesting	Privilege
Attendance	Equipment	Irrelevant	Receive
Beginning	Epecially	Irresistible	Recommend
Believe	Exaggerate	Jewelry	Reference
Business	Exceed	Judgment	Restaurant
Calendar	Excellence	Kindergarten	Rhythm
Cemetery	Exercise	Knowledge	Schedule
Choose	Existence	Laboratory	Separate
Chose	Experience	Leisure	Sophomore
Collage	Familiar	Liaison	Succeed
College	February	License	Surprise
Column	Foreign	Lightning	Technique
Commitment	Forty	Maneuver	Tragedy
Conscience	Fourth	Marriage	Unnecessary
Conscious	Government	Mathematics	Usually
Convenient	Grammar	Miniature	Vacuum
Definitely	Grateful	Mischievous	Weird
Desperate	Guarantee	Misspell	Writing

## Commonly Confused Words

affect ( <i>verb</i> )	to cause something to change
effect ( <i>noun</i> )	a result brought about by a cause
all ready	prepared
already	previously
allusion	referencing something else
illusion	a false vision or fantasy
bad	adjective ( <i>We own a bad dog</i> )
badly	adverb ( <i>He plays tennis badly</i> )
between	shared by only two people or things
among	shared by more than two people of things
breath	Noun ( <i>I can hold my breath.</i> )
breathe	Verb ( <i>I breathe in the smoke.</i> )
capital	uppercase letters
capitol	legislative body building
compare to	similarity between the things compared
compare with	similarity or difference
complement	to go well with
compliment	a flattering statement (or act of making one)
further	time or degree
farther	physical distance
good	adjective- describes a noun
well	adverb – describes a verb
lay	when the subject acts on a direct object
lie	used when there is no direct object
less	quantities that cannot be counted
fewer	quantities that can be counted
much	quantities that cannot be counted
many	quantities that can be counted
principle	An idea, moral precept
principal	High rank, importance ( <i>the school's principal is your pal</i> )
real	adjective- describes a noun
really	adverb – describes a verb
whether	situations of speculation or uncertainty ( <i>I wonder whether the plane will arrive soon.</i> )
if	on the condition that ( <i>I can go if I get my homework done.</i> )
who	is a subject ( <i>Who is coming to the party?</i> )
whom	is an object ( <i>Whom should I invite?</i> )
etc.	and so forth
e.g.	for example
i.e.	that is



## QUICK TIPS for Improving STYLE

- Avoid cliches**
- TAKE RISKS**
- Provide details**
  - Add imagery (use the senses)
  - Replace abstract nouns with concrete nouns
  - Focus on active verbs and precise nouns
  - Avoid adjectives as much as possible—use nouns that imply the description
  - Avoid adverbs as much as possible
    - played loudly (use “blared”)
- No exclamation points.** Your word choices, sentence structure, and content should provide the reader the emphasis.
- Avoid “started to”** beginning writers often use these phrases which bog down writing. Ex. “He started to look around the room..” Use...He scanned the room.
- Make your first sentence count.**
- Cut What Does Not Bleed-** In other words, look at each word in each piece of writing. If you can take something out and it doesn’t take anything away from the piece—then get rid of it.
- Your work is never done only due.** Real writing happens in revision. Don’t put your pen down and say you’re done when you finish the first draft. Revise. Revise. Revise

## Specifically In fiction

- Watch for psychic distance** When writing in first person the reader is closer to the action. Ex. “I saw her standing by the bench...” (*the reader is looking at the narrator looking at the woman*)  
**Change to:** “She stood by the bench...” (*the reader sees what the narrator sees*)
- CONFLICT CONFLICT CONFLICT** Many new writers do not provide a conflict or their conflict is weak. Use the “Somebody-Wanted-But-So” formula to help develop a plot. Ex. Cinderella (*somebody*) wanted to go to the ball (*wanted*) *but* her jealous step-sisters and evil step-mother prevented her from going (*so*) her fairy godmother helped (*but*) she only had until midnight...etc.