**Writing Rules Refresher**

*Review the rules below, correct the errors, and add rules that trip you up to your Individual Proofreading Checklist. Feel free to use the Internet or other resources to help you complete this document.*

1. **Know your grammar vocabulary.** You need to know the following words so that we can communicate about your writing. Based upon the definitions, write down examples for each term.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** | **Examples** |
| Noun | A noun names a person, animal, place, thing, quality, idea, activity, or feeling.  A noun can be singular, plural, or show possession. | Singular: Plural: Possessive:  |
| Pronoun | A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. | Pronouns:  |
| Verb | A verb shows action and can be a main verb or a helping verb that “assists” another verb in describing the action. Verbs also indicate tense and sometimes change their form to show past, present, or future tense. Linking verbs describe the relationship between the subject and the rest of the sentence. | Action verb: Helping verb: Linking verb:Past tense:Present tense: Future tense:  |
| Adjective | An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun. It adds meaning by telling how much, which one, what kind, or describing it in other ways. | Adjectives:  |
| Adverb | An adverb will describe a verb or an adjective and tell more about it, like how much, when, where, or how. | Adverbs:  |
| Conjunction | Conjunctions connect two words, phrases, or clauses | Conjunctions:  |
| Preposition | A preposition shows a relationship between nouns or pronouns. It is often used with a noun to show location. | Prepositions:  |
| Subject | The subject is the star of the sentence; the person, animal, or thing that is the focus of it. | Subject:  |
| Predicate | The predicate will tell the action that the subject is taking or tell something about the subject. | Predicate (that fits with the subject above to make a complete sentence): |
| Phrases | A group of two or more grammatically linked words that **do not** have a subject and predicate is a phrase. | Phrase:  |
| Clauses | A group of two or more grammatically linked words that **do** have a subject and predicate is a phrase. | Clause:  |
| Independent Clauses | A clause that has a complete thought and can act as a complete sentence. | Independent clause: |
| Dependent Clauses | A clause that does not have a complete thought. | Dependent clause:  |

1. **Use the correct homophone.** Homophones are words that sound alike, but have different spellings and meanings. Use each of the following homophones correctly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| their, there, they’re |  |
| your, you’re |  |
| its, it’s |  |
| affect, effect |  |
| \*than, then |  |

*\*These aren’t true homophones, but people say the two words so similarly these days that I’m including them here.*

1. **Avoid sentence fragments.** Sentence fragments are incomplete sentences that are missing a subject, verb, or a complete thought. Correct the fragments below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fragment | Jumping over the rainbow. |
| Sentence |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fragment | Even though he didn’t want to go to school. |
| Sentence |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fragment | Brian, the awkward boy. |
| Sentence |  |

1. **Use proper capitalization.** Capitalize the first word of every sentence and title, the word “I”, important words in titles, and proper nouns (specific people, places, and things). Fix the capitalization in the sentences below.

|  |
| --- |
| while writing for the new york times, bob wrote a scathing review of the book to kill a mockingbird. |
| i live near spring creek park in houserville. |

1. **Include commas after introductory words or phrases.** If the subject doesn’t start the sentence, you’ve probably got an introductory word or phrase that needs to be separated by a comma. Add commas where needed below.

|  |
| --- |
| Although the cat jumped over the moon the cow ignored the scene while munching on the moonlit grass.  |
| Next we’ll take a ride in the Batmobile. |

1. **Combine independent clauses with commas and conjunctions.** When combining two sentences (independent clauses) together, you need both a comma and conjunction (FANBOYS). If you’re missing one, you have either a run-on sentence or comma splice. Add commas where necessary below.

|  |
| --- |
| She galloped over the fence and that’s when she face planted in the mud. |
| Not many people know that Stewy tells children lies all the time but I know that he never passed third grade.  |

1. **Avoid wordiness.** Get to the point as quickly as possible and avoid adverbs. They’re really annoying…I mean they’re exasperating. Use precise vocabulary to fix the sentences below to avoid wordiness.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Wordy | He dropped out of school on account of the fact that it was necessary for him to avoid being bullied by those who were bullying him. |
| Better |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Wordy | It is very unusual to find someone who has absolutely never told a deliberate lie on purpose. |
| Better |  |

1. **Make sure your subjects and verbs agree.** Subjects are either about one person or thing (singular) or more (plural). Verbs need to match. Fix the sentences below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Poor Agreement | She and her pony was the best of friends. |
| Fixed |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Poor Agreement | The man of many talents own a Youtube channel viewed by almost eight people. |
| Fixed |  |

1. **Make sure your pronouns clearly refer to something or someone specific.** If you use she, he, him, her, they, etc., make sure that it’s clear who you are referring to. Fix the unclear pronouns below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Unclear Pronoun | The Masons own a lot of dogs. They’re ugly. |
| Fixed |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Unclear Pronoun | The boy walked over to me with his pet tarantula named Alfred. He made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. |
| Fixed |  |

1. **Avoid misplaced modifiers.** Similar to pronoun clarity, make sure that descriptions within sentences clearly refer to something or someone. Fix the misplaced modifiers below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Misplaced Modifier | Dripping slowly onto the floor, Beth watched the last of her precious salad dressing become inedible. |
| Fixed |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Misplaced Modifier | I smelled the stew coming down the stairs for dinner. |
| Fixed |  |