

Common Errors Review

Common Usage Errors

Be sure that you proofread each writing assignment before you turn it in. Errors in your writing can confuse and distract your readers. Readers may form a poor impression of a writer who makes careless errors. Look for mistakes, especially in the following areas:

Do subjects and verbs agree?

Are modifiers in the correct form?

Do pronouns and antecedents agree?

Are modifiers placed correctly?

Are verb forms and tenses correct?

Is usage appropriate for audience and purpose?

After you make corrections or changes, read your writing again. Sometimes a change you make will create a new problem in another part of your writing.

EXERCISE A The following items contain common errors in usage. Review the list of problem areas above and correct the errors. Use proofreading marks to make your corrections.

Example 1. For my father's birthday last year, my sister, my brother, and ~~me~~^{Iy} ~~plan~~^{ned} a special dinner. [The pronoun *me* is part of the compound subject and should be changed to *I* because *I* is the subject form of the pronoun. The words *last year* tell you that the events in the sentence took place in the past. The verb form should be the past tense, *planned*, not the present tense, *plan*.]

1. The three of we will serve roast chicken, rice, carrots, and salad. [Is the pronoun in the correct case?]
2. We went to the store and buyed all the ingredients. [Are irregular verbs in the correct form?]
3. My sister washed the chicken careful and put her in the roasting pan.
4. My brother, whom only is nine years old, scrubbed the carrots and washed the lettuce.
5. I measured the rice, poured them into a saucepan, and putted the lid on the pan.
6. When that there chicken was near finished, we started the carrots and the rice.
7. Humming and singing to hisself, the table was set by my brother.
8. Soon we worked good together, and dinner was ready.
9. Their father was so surprised that he couldn't hardly talk.
10. All of us thought that the food was the deliciousest that we had ever ate.

Common Mechanics Errors

When you write, always check your capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Use a dictionary if you are not sure of a spelling or a word division. Make sure you haven't confused two words that sound alike but are spelled differently. These details make a big difference in your writing! Look for errors in the following areas, too:

- Does every sentence begin with a capital letter?
- Are all proper nouns capitalized?
- Does every sentence end with an appropriate end mark?
- Have you placed commas where they are needed?
- Are direct quotations and titles capitalized and punctuated correctly?
- Are words spelled and divided correctly?

EXERCISE B The following paragraph contains errors in mechanics. Correct the errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Use proofreading marks to make your corrections.

Example 1. As far as we know, the passenger pigeon, a bird that once inhabited the Eastern part of north america, is extinct. [The words *a bird that once inhabited the eastern part of North America* should be set off by commas. The word *eastern* refers to a direction, not a region, and should not be capitalized. The words *North America* should be capitalized because they name a continent. The sentence is a statement and should end with a period.]

11. When john james audubon the well known artist and naturalist observed a migrating flock in 1813 he tried to count the birds [What words should be capitalized? Where should commas go? What end mark is needed?]
12. according to Audubon the pigeons continued to fly overhead for 3 days
13. Passenger pigeons were commercially hunted for their meat in the 1800s by 1850 several thousand people were involved in hunting and processing the birds
14. Fewer birds were seen after 1870 and the last known passenger pigeon who's name was martha died in the cincinnati zoo in 1914.
15. How could such a common bird have become extinct in about one Century