

Using Parts of Sentence

Once we understand the parts of sentence, we can apply that knowledge to punctuation, agreement, and writing style.

Punctuation

Do not put a comma between the subject and the verb if you can help it.

Wrong: The first of her novels, was published anonymously.

Right: The first of her novels was published anonymously.

Agreement

The subject and the verb are the beating heart of the sentence. They must agree. When there is a prepositional phrase between the subject of the sentence and the verb, match the verb to the real subject, not to the object of the preposition.

Wrong: The best **novel** by those authors **were** anonymous.

Right: The best **novel** by those authors **was** anonymous.

Writing: Be Thoughtful about Parts of Sentence

The parts of sentence are the main words of the sentence. They are the main parts of thought. They are like the branches, and the modifiers are like the leaves. Be thoughtful about the words you use for them—for the subject, or the action verb, or the direct object, or the subject complement. A good noun for the direct object is better than a hollow noun rescued by an adjective.