

Clauses:

Punctuation and Grammar

Now let us highlight important rules that pertain to clauses. We already have examined most usage issues, so we will focus only on punctuation and grammar now.

PUNCTUATION

comma (,):

after introductory dependent clauses (D,I): As he left, we began again.

around nonessential (nonrestrictive) clauses:

Daryl Darrel, who is my uncle, decided to demur.

before coordinating conjunctions in I,ccI compound sentences:

Madeline made models, but Hedda had ham.

semicolon (;):

between independent clauses with no coordinating conjunction (I;I):

The time is out of joint; I must depart immediately.

between independent clauses joined by conjunctive adverbs *however*, etc.

I literally laughed; however, you laterally loafed.

period (.):

at the end of a declarative sentence: I have three words.

at the end of a mild imperative sentence: Please pursue the plot.

inside closing quotation marks: He said, "Stop that parrot."

question mark (?):

at the end of an interrogative sentence: Do you have rhubarb?

inside closing quotes if part of quote: He asked, "How about a flower?"

outside quotes if not part of quote: Did he say, "I'll allow it louder"?

exclamation point (!):

after an exclamatory sentence: The sky is falling!

after a strong imperative sentence: Everyone sit up!

inside closing quotes if part of quote: He cried, "I shall return!"

outside quotes if not part of quote: I can't believe he said, "I won't tell you"!

apostrophe ('):

missing letter(s) in a subject-verb contraction: don't

in the contraction of *it* and *is*: It's a good day to diet.

GRAMMAR ERRORS

We have seen some of these errors in other levels, but it will do no harm to observe that they are issues that arise in clause construction as well.

Subject/Verb Disagreement *s/v*

As we already have seen, a subject/verb disagreement is the worst error in grammar. The subject of each clause will be either singular or plural, and the verb must agree with it in number. If the subject of the clause is singular, the verb must be singular.

Wrong: *The **reason** for the numerous objections **are** obvious.*

Right: *The **reason** for the numerous objections **is** obvious.*

When you write each clause, notice the real subject, and make sure that your verb matches it and only it.

Run-On Sentence *R-S*

A compound sentence joined by a coordinating conjunction must have a comma before the conjunction, or else it is a **run-on sentence**.

Wrong: *The sun began to rise and they saw the extent of the damage.*

Right: *The sun began to rise, and they saw the extent of the damage.*

Comma Splice *CS*

A comma splice occurs when a comma, rather than a semicolon or comma and coordinating conjunction, is used to connect two independent clauses.

Wrong: *The old man reeled in the fish, the sun began to set.*

Right: *The old man reeled in the fish, and the sun began to set.*

Right: *The old man reeled in the fish; the sun began to set.*

Split Infinitive *split inf*

We regard an infinitive as a single word. In advanced academic writing we do not split the infinitive with an adverb.

Wrong: *Roosevelt began to slowly develop economic programs.*

Right: *Slowly, Roosevelt began to develop economic programs.*