

Get Ready for the GED Test: Grammar and Punctuation

For the **Reasoning through the Language Arts (RLA)** section of the **GED test**, you need to be able to do the following:

- Correct capitalization errors
- Correct spelling and frequently confused words (such as two, to, and too)
- Eliminate non-standard English words or phrases
 - o (use *kind of* instead of *kinda*)
- Correct errors in punctuation, such as with apostrophes, commas, and semi-colons
- Correct pronoun errors
 - o (*The mayor is meeting with her council members*, not *The mayor is meeting with their council members*)
- Correct subject-verb agreement errors
 - o (*My mother is here* not *My mother are here*)
- Eliminate run-on sentences and sentence fragments
 - o (*We met at the restaurant, but I didn't like the menu. It had too much fish. I wanted to try a better and cheaper place.*
These sentences are better than *We met at the restaurant, but I didn't like the menu because it had too much fish and I wanted to try a different place. Better and cheaper.* The second example has a run on sentence and a fragment.)
- Eliminate wordiness or awkward sentence structure
 - o (*I am the best candidate for this job* not *The reason is that I am the best candidate for this job*).
- Edit sentences for parallel structure
 - o (*He likes reading, swimming and eating.* NOT *He likes reading, swimming and to eat*)
- Edit sentences for correct use of conjunctions
 - o (*I have many friends, good food, and I am happy.* NOT *I have many friends, good food, but I am happy*).
- Eliminate misplaced or dangling modifiers
- Use transitions words and phrases correctly, such as *however*, *although*, and *in conclusion*.

Chapter One: Getting the Words Down Right: Spelling and Homonyms

Spelling: The best way to learn to spell well is to read a lot. If you are not a good speller, you can also use spell check. After you've written something, use spell check to go through your document and identify words you misspelled.

Start a spelling notebook. In this notebook, you will have a page or two for each letter of the alphabet. Each page should have two columns. When you learn, through spell check, that you have misspelled a word, let's say *disapointed*, choose the page for letter D in your spelling notebook. Write the way you wrote the word (*disapointed*) in the left column. Write the correct spelling of the word (*disappointed*) in the right column. Study the words from time to time and quiz yourself.

Homonyms. Homonyms are words that sound alike, but are spelled differently and have different meanings. A list is below. Study the list, then do the exercises that follow:

Homonyms (Words that sound the same but are spelled differently)

accept	Verb meaning "to receive" (<i>I accepted the gift with pleasure</i>)
except	To exclude (Everyone except you)
advice	Noun meaning "words that help you out or tell you what to do" (<i>I gave her good advice when her husband left</i>)
advise	Verb meaning to <i>give advice</i> to someone (<i>I advised her to think before enrolling in that class</i>)
be	Verb meaning "to exist" (<i>I hate to be blunt, but you don't look good in that dress.</i>)
bee	An insect (<i>Some people are afraid of bees</i>)
brake	To stop, or the part of a vehicle that makes it stop (<i>I always brake for pedestrians</i>)
break	Rest period (take a break) or damage and destroy (<i>break the car</i>) (<i>Class has a 15 minute break.</i>)
for	To be used as (<i>the spoon is for stirring</i>); in favor of (<i>I'm all for sports</i>) ; it should belong to you (<i>that book is for Tracy</i>)
four	The number 4
knew	To be familiar with or certain of (<i>I knew her when she was a baby</i>) or (<i>I knew she was going to fall</i>) (verb; past tense)
new	Not old
know	To have information (<i>I know all about science</i>)
no	Opposite of yes; not (<i>We have no shirts in stock</i>)
lose	To fail to win or to keep (<i>I lost monopoly and then I lost my car keys</i>)
loose	Not tight (<i>Her clothes were loose; or the door was loose</i>)
one	The number 1

won	The past tense of the verb win (<i>We won the game after 9 innings</i>)
passed	Past tense of pass or went by (<i>We passed the deli</i>)
past	A time before (<i>Our relationship is all in the past now</i>)
right	Correct or opposite of left (<i>You would be right if you said you use your right hand to say the Pledge of Allegiance</i>)
write	To form words on paper (<i>I don't like to write letters</i>)
roll	Verb: to turn over or noun: a type of bread (<i>When I roll over in the morning I can barely get out of bed. Then my mother brings me a sweet roll and I have energy.</i>)
role	A part to play (<i>Conflict in the Middle East plays a role in oil prices</i>).
sight	The ability to see (<i>My sight isn't good at night</i>)
site	A place where something happens, including a website.
there	A place or a state of being (<i>There it is</i>). (<i>There is a bad feeling here</i>)
their	Belonging to them (<i>Their grades were perfect</i>)
They're	Contraction of "they" and "are" (<i>They're going to be sorry when they see that mess.</i>)
to	Used in front of a verb (<i>I used to love her</i>) or direction (<i>She's going to the store</i>).
two	The number 2
too	Also or very (<i>I would like to go too.</i>) (<i>It's too hot</i>).
wait	To stay around for something or someone (<i>I will wait until you're finished</i>)
weight	How heavy something is (<i>I'm really gaining weight</i>).
way	Path, direction (<i>That is not the way to get famous</i>)
weigh	Verb: to measure how heavy something is (<i>Let's weigh the flour to see how much we're putting into the bowl.</i>)
where	What place (<i>Where is class today?</i>)
wear	To have clothing (<i>What are you wearing to class today?</i>)
were	Past tense of are: <i>Where were you yesterday?</i>
whether	If (<i>Let me know whether you're going to the movies or not</i>)
weather	Climate outside (<i>Weird weather we're having</i>)
when	A time that something happened (<i>When I went to school, there were no desks</i>)
went	Past tense of the verb "to go." (<i>When I went to school, there were no desks.</i>)
Your	Belonging to you (<i>That's your favorite song</i>)
You're	Contraction of "you" and "are" (<i>You're looking good today</i>)

Fill in the blanks. Use the correct form of the word.

1. _____ (There/Their/they're) we were, _____
(to/two/too) young women out on the town. 2. It was a Friday night. 3. We'd come out
to _____ (meet/meat) _____ (two/to/too) men we hooked
up with on an Internet dating _____ (site/sight). 4. You _____
(know/no) how it is—they were both full of stories about how they were looking
_____ (for/four) "chemistry." 5. What can you do when _____
(you're/your) in _____ (you're/your) thirties and you'd really like to
_____ (be/bee) with someone? 6. We _____
(passed/past) the bar _____ (where/were) they said they
_____ (were/where) going to _____ (be/bee). 7. I
_____ (knew/new) they might not be _____ (their/they're/there). 8. I told
myself we were only going to be _____ (they're/there/their) twenty minutes
and that was it. 9. That afternoon, before we had come to _____ (weight/wait)
it out, I was still wondering what to _____ (wear/where) and
_____ (whether/weather) it was a good idea or not. 10. Well, they never
came. 11. _____ (They're/there/their) was _____ (one/won) moment
when _____ (two/too/to) men walked _____ (past/passed) and I
thought maybe that was them, but _____ (no/know) go. 12. The worst part was,
wouldn't you _____ (no/know) it, it turns out later I would
_____ (lose/loose) my keys. 13. What can you do? I _____
(new/knew) it probably wasn't my night. 14. It's not easy being a single woman—you
go _____ (through/threw) a lot. 15. I guess you just have to
_____ (role/roll) with the punches.

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IS A SENTENCE?

What is a sentence?

Look at the numbered items below. Which ones are sentences and which ones are not sentences? How do you know? For each one, say whether you think it is a sentence or not. If it is NOT a sentence, explain why.

1. Time always seemed too short.
2. She talked.
3. Jose and Lissette complained about the lady at the welfare office.
4. Last winter, my mother fell on the ice and broke her hip.
5. Love saves the day.

Here is what other students have said about these sentences:

Is it a sentence?	Student comments:
1. Time always seemed too short.	<i>I'm not sure.</i>
2. She talked.	<i>I don't think so. There isn't enough information. It doesn't tell what she talked about.</i>
3. Jose and Lissette complained about the lady at the welfare office.	<i>Yes I think it is because it has enough information.</i>
4. Last winter, my mother fell on the ice and broke her hip.	<i>Yes, I think it's a sentence.</i>
5. Love saves the day.	<i>I'm not sure. Can you start a sentence with the word "love?" Isn't "love" an action word like "I love you?"</i>

You have probably heard various explanations, for instance:

A sentence is a complete thought.

For our purposes here, we will use a very simple definition of what a sentence is:

A sentence has a subject and a verb.

Kate talked.

The mother walked.

The **verb** is the word that shows action, although some verbs, like are, be, was, were, seemed etc. don't seem very active. The verb is also the word that changes with the time.

*Kate **talks**.*

*Kate **will talk**.*

*Kate **talked**.*

Once you have identified the **verb**, you can identify the **subject**. The subject is the thing that does the action of the verb.

Who talked? Kate talked. Kate is the **subject**.

Verbs can be two or even three words:

Kate had been talking for 3 hours.

And the **verb** can have words in between:

Kate had really been talking a lot.

You can also have a *compound subject*:

Kate and Mark talked.

That's all that is needed to make a sentence. So the answer is, yes, a sentence can be made up of only two words, as long as it has a subject and a verb. In the sentence:

***She talked**, "She" is the subject, and "talked" is the verb.*

So—that's rule one—A sentence has a subject and a verb. The following are all sentences:

It wasn't.

He didn't.

She couldn't.

They ran.

They are sentences because each of them has a subject and a verb.

So—very simple.

But that still leaves you with a problem. You don't know if it's a sentence unless you can identify the subject and the verb.

VERBS

Let's talk first about **the verb**. The **verb** is the word that **shows action**. In the sentences below, the verbs are:

Kate **talked**. "Talked" is the verb.

The mother **walked**. "Walked" is the verb.

Verbs should be easy to identify. Usually, when your teacher asks you what a **verb** is, you say “an action word.” However, be aware that **many verbs don’t sound very active**. For instance,

Time always seemed too short......is there really an action there?

What about: **He wasn’t there** or

There weren’t any more or

He was or

She hadn’t seen it before.

In the sentences above, the verbs are all versions of the verb “to be.”

To be (was, wasn’t, are, be, were, had been, would have been)

Or, in the sentence “Time always seemed too short,” the verb is **“seems.”**

So that’s another thing to remember about verbs—we call them action words, but sometimes they don’t seem very active.

Using Tense as a Clue

.....So if you can’t depend on the usual definition, a verb is an action word,” what test can you use to decide if a word is a verb or not?

The best test of whether a word is a verb or not is the “time” test. **Verbs change with the time.**

You know that a verb is an action word, but if you are still not sure which word in a sentence is the verb, you can also remember this: The verb is also the word that *changes with the time*.

Kate **talks**.

Kate **will talk**

Kate **talked**.

This works for all verbs:

I **was**. (yesterday)

I **am**. (today)

I **will be**. (tomorrow)

OR:

She **talked**. (yesterday)

She **talks**. (today)

She **will talk**. (tomorrow)

(The grammatical term for this is **tense**. We can say “past tense,” “present tense,” and “future tense.” If you want to do more work with tenses, watch these *videos* or work on these *exercises*.

A little more about verbs:

Sometimes students have trouble knowing what the verb is. For instance, with the sentence:

Time always seemed too short, some students think that “always” might be the verb.

“Always” certainly sounds like it has to do with time.

If you’re not sure, try the time test. Is it possible to say “I always-ed?” If not, then “always” is not a verb.

Now, let's try that with the word "seemed."

Can you say "It seemed"?

Can you say "It seems"?

Can you say "It will seem?" (That one does sound a little funny, but it happens to be correct).

So....that's a question you can ask yourself when you aren't sure which word is the verb. Does the word change with the time....in other words, does it have a past tense and a present tense version? If it does, it's a verb.

Another thing about verbs:

Sometimes what we call "the verb" in a sentence can have two or even three words:

- ☐ She had been there before.
- ☐ I have been waiting for three days.
- ☐ She was running along the river.
- ☐ They had been on line forever.
- ☐ I didn't want my father to know about it.

And the **verb** can have words in between:

Kate had really been talking a lot.

She was always running.

And finally, you can have two or more separate verbs in a sentence that show two separate actions:

He **ran**, **fell**, and **got up** again.

I **broke down** and **cried**.

I **wrote** a letter and then I **sent** it.

Last winter, my mother **fell** on the ice and **broke** her hip.

(For more work on identifying verbs, see.....)

FINDING THE SUBJECT

Once you have identified the **verb**, you can identify the **subject**. The subject is the thing that does the action of the verb.

Who talked? Kate talked. Kate is the **subject**.

Remember that the subject is a **noun**. What's the definition of "**noun**" again? **A noun is a person, place or thing**. So, the subject of a sentence is always a noun:

They went to the circus.

He never left.

The **circus** is gone.

Texas is a hot place.

...but sometimes we have something we call "abstract nouns." These are nouns that express ideas.

Time

Eternity

Love

Happiness

Death.

You can't touch them—they are more like ideas. But for the purposes of grammar, they are considered things. They are nouns. And since they are nouns, they can also be the subjects in a sentence, so:

Time always seemed too short (the verb is "seemed" and the subject is "Time")

Love saves the day (the verb is "saves" and the subject is "Love.")

A little more about subjects:

You can have a **subject** that is *more than one word*:

Jose and Lissette complained about the lady at the welfare office.

The subject is: *Jose and Lissette*. The verb is: *complained*.

Also good to know: The subject is not always the first word in the sentence:

Last winter, my mother fell on the ice and broke her hip.

The subject is **not** "Last night." "Last night" tells us when the action happened. The **subject** is "My mother." She is the one who did the action of falling on the ice and breaking her hip.

TEST YOURSELF. For each set, choose the one that is a complete sentence.

SET A

1. Later in the year
2. Seasons such as spring and summer.
3. They are.
4. After your homework.

SET B

1. Any sort of clothing
2. Dogs, cats and other popular family pets.
3. Anyone with a bicycle.
4. He is one and she is another.

SET C

1. They cut the grass.
2. Because of the long grass
3. Before cutting the grass
4. The best lawnmower for the job

SET D

1. The leftovers from last weekend's barbeque.
2. For example, coffee shops.
3. The gift from your parents.
4. He is one.

SET E

1. Arriving on time.
2. Life and a person's goals
3. Life in other countries is easier.
4. Life and goals

SET F.

1. Every morning.
2. In response to an earlier incident.
3. Rushing when late.
4. As soon as I have finished, I'll call you.

SET G

1. The bad weather.
2. Heavy rain throughout the night.
3. Running scared.
4. Rain is expected throughout the night.

SET H

1. If you won't, I will.
2. Anyone without good English skills.
3. Can be a frustrating experience.
4. At least three times a week.

SET I

1. The award was a complete surprise.
2. The award for best supporting actor.
3. Clapping wildly.
4. Being a complete surprise.

SET J

1. That isn't the reason.

2. An illegal act.
3. Forgetting everything
4. Very convenient but impossible.

SET K

1. I will when you are ready.
2. For example, online dating.
3. Among all the reasons for online dating.
4. Endlessly worrying.

Chapter THREE: NOUNS and Capitalization

The previous lesson stated a rule about sentences: A sentence has a subject and a verb. The SUBJECT is always going to be a NOUN or a PRONOUN:

Let's talk a little more about nouns. A noun is a

- Person
- Place, or
- Thing

Some nouns are PROPER NOUNS. What's a PROPER NOUN?



We know that we have to CAPITALIZE the first word of a sentence. We also need to capitalize PROPER NOUNS. Here are some examples below:

English Capitalization Rules:

1. Capitalize the First Word of a Sentence

The cat is sleeping.

Where did I put that book?

Hey! It's great to see you! How have you been?

2. Capitalize Names and Other Proper Nouns

You should always capitalize people's names.

My favorite author is Jane Austen.

Tom and Diane met at Judy's house.

Have you met my dog, Boomer?

Names are proper nouns. The names of cities, countries, companies, religions, and political parties are also proper nouns, so you should capitalize them, too.

We experienced some beautiful Southern California weather last fall when we attended a Catholic wedding in San Diego.

You should also capitalize words like *mom* and *grandpa* when they are used as a form of address.

Just wait until Mom sees this!

But

My mom is not going to like this.

3. Capitalize Days, Months, and Holidays, but not Seasons

The names of days, months, and holidays are proper nouns, so you should capitalize them.

I hate Mondays!

Tom's birthday is in June.

Oh no! I forgot about Valentine's Day!

The names of seasons, however, are not proper nouns, so there's no need to capitalize them.

I hate winter!

Having a summer birthday is the best.

5. Capitalize Most Words in Titles

The capitalization rules for titles of books, movies, and other works vary a little between style guides. In general, you should capitalize the first word, all nouns, all verbs (even short ones, like *is*), all adjectives, and all proper nouns. That means you should lowercase articles, conjunctions,

and prepositions—however, some style guides say to capitalize conjunctions and prepositions that are longer than five letters.

Sense and Sensibility is better than *Pride and Prejudice*.

The first movie of the series is *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

6. Capitalize Cities, Countries, Nationalities, and Languages

The names of cities, countries, nationalities, and languages are proper nouns, so you should capitalize them:

English is made up of many languages, including Latin, German, and French.

My mother is British, and my father is Dutch.

The capital of Botswana is Gaborone.

7. Capitalize Time Periods and Events (Sometimes)

Specific periods, eras, and historical events that have proper names should be capitalized.

Most of the World War I veterans are now deceased.

In the Middle Ages, poor hygiene was partly responsible for the spreading of bubonic plague.

Middle school students often enjoy studying the social changes that took place during the Roaring Twenties.

However, centuries—and the numbers before them—are not capitalized.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England blossomed into an empire.

8. ONE MORE capitalization rule: Capitalize the First Word of a Quote (Sometimes)

Capitalize the first word of a quote if the quote is a complete sentence.

Mario asked, "What is everyone doing this weekend?"

Stacy answered, "My sister and I are going to the water park."

Don't capitalize the first word of partial quotes.

Gretchen said she was "way too busy" to join the gym.

Mr. Thompson described the rules as "extremely difficult to understand if you don't have a law degree."

Grammar Exercises Capitalization. For each of the following, choose the correct sentence.

SET ONE

- A. Mark Paxton, the vice president of the company, embezzled over one million dollars.
- B. Mark Paxton, the Vice President of the company, embezzled over one million dollars.

SET TWO

- A. The president of the United States wields much power
- B. The President of the United States wields much power.

SET THREE

- A. I live in the Northeastern part of the state, where the climate is colder.
- B. I live in the northeastern part of the state, where the climate is colder.

SET FOUR

- A. The West, especially California, is famous for its cutting edge technology
- B. The west, especially California, is famous for its cutting edge technology.

SET FIVE

- A. Have you read “All the King’s Men?”
- B. Have you read “All The King’s Men?”

SET SIX

- A. I enjoy summer more than any other season.
- B. I enjoy Summer more than any other season.

SET SEVEN

- A. She said, “bees are not the only insects that sting.”
- B. She said, “Bees are not the only insects that sting.”

SET EIGHT

- A. “You must understand,” he pleaded, “That I need more time to pay you.”
- B. “You must understand,” he pleased, “that I need more time to pay you.”

Chapter Four: Nouns and Possession

In all languages, we have ways to show that one thing belongs to another. This is called possession, and we use an apostrophe to show it. There are two reasons to use an apostrophe, and one of them is possession.

Look at these sentences:

The Smith's car can't make it up the hill anymore. Mr. Smith's paycheck hasn't been able to stretch enough to pay for car repairs.

The underlined words use **apostrophes**. Apostrophes are used for two reasons:

For **contractions**: Sometimes we put two words together into one. Here are some examples:

- Can not = can't
- Will not = won't
- I am = I'm
- Has not = hasn't
- Have not=haven't
- Was not= weren't
- Does not=doesn't

For **possessives**.

- Susan'**s** cat (the cat of Susan)
- Dhaquan'**s** memories (the memories of Dhaquan)
- The cat'**s** litter box (the litter box of the cat)
- My aunt'**s** best friend (the best friend of my aunt)

When we add an '**s** to a noun, we show that one thing belongs to another, even if might not seem like something you can "own":

Bella'**s** hopes and dreams

DO NOT CONFUSE a *possessive* with a **plural**:

- The cat**s**
- The aunt**s**
- The dress**es**
- The babi**ies**

Three ways to make a plural:

#1: Add "s"

#2: Add "es" if the word already ends with "s."

#3: If a word ends in "y," drop the "y" and add "ies."

- Cat**s**
- Circus**es**
- ladi**ies**

But wait...what if a word is a **plural** **AND** a *possessive*?

Two sisters share a room. We want to be able to show that we are talking about two (plural) and about ownership (possessive). It looks like this:

- The girls**s'** room
- My parents**s'** house
- The boys**s'** sports equipment
- The lions**s'** manes.

Also:

- The Jones**s'** vacation house (*there is more than one Jones, and the house belongs to all of them*)
- The Hastings**s'** party.

But just to make it more confusing, you can also do this:

- Chris's car or Chris' car—both are correct
- Tod Jones's boat or Tod Jones' boat—both are correct
- James's key or James' keys—both are correct.

Just to make it more complicated, there are **irregular plural nouns**, and special rules to make those irregular plural nouns possessive:

- The gases' odor
- The babies' room
- Women's bathroom
- Children's book
- The geese's habitat is endangered.

What about holidays?

- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- New Year's Day
- Season's Greetings
- Presidents' Day

Exercises with plurals and possessives. Fill in the correct form of the word in the blank.

- This is _____book. (*Peter*)
- Let's go to the _____. (*Smiths*)
- The _____ room is upstairs. (*children*)
- _____ sister is twelve years old. (*John*)
- _____and _____ school is old. (*Susan – Steve*)
- _____ shoes are on the second floor. (*men*)
- My _____ car was not expensive. (*parents*)

- _____CD player is new. (*Charles*)
- This is the _____ bike. (*boy*)
- These are the _____ pencils. (*boys*)

Chapter Five: Nouns & Pronouns

In English, we have NOUNS and PRONOUNS. Pronouns STAND IN for nouns.

Noun—Kate

Pronoun—she

Noun-Mark

Pronoun--he

Noun—Kate and Moya

Pronoun—we or they

Here are all the pronouns:

I

You

He/she

We

You

They

WHY do we need pronouns?

Let's look at this sentence:

Elijah went to the store, where Elijah bought beans; then Elijah came home and cooked dinner.

It sounds weird because I keep repeating “Elijah.” To make the sentence sound right, I have to use PRONOUNS.

Elijah went to the store, where he bought beans, then he came home and cooked dinner.

This is important: *In English sentences, the noun or pronoun must use the correct form of the verb.*

Each pronoun takes a certain FORM of a verb:

I write

You write

He/she writes

We write

In English, this is a pattern that is true for all REGULAR verbs:

I, you, we, they run

He, she runs

I, you, we, they talk

He, she talks

I, you, we, they build

He, she builds

When we write sentences, we have to make sure the form of the **verb** agrees with the **subject** (the noun or pronoun that is the subject of the sentence). If you aren't sure, try substituting the pronoun for the noun.

Take a look at these exercises:

1. Annie and her brothers (is/are) at school.

The PRONOUN that could substitute for “Anne and her brothers” is THEY. Would we say *They is* at school or would we say *They are* at school?

Try the rest of the exercises on your own:

2. My parents (is/are) coming to the meeting.

3. We (weren't/wasn't) happy with the way they talked to us.

4. Frankie and Tamara (doesn't/don't) want to see that movie.

5. She (don't/doesn't) know what she's doing.

There are also special situations:

Nobody, anybody, everyone

When these words are the subject of the sentence, you use the “she/he” form of the verb:

- Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen.
- Everybody who meets her, loves her.
- Everyone who meets her, loves her.
- Anyone who cares about her should come to the funeral.

Singular nouns that end with “s”:

Sometimes you have a noun that ends with “s” even though it isn’t plural:

- Mathematics
- Civics
- Dollars

Even though they end in an “s,” these nouns are treated like ONE THING:

- Mathematics is John’s favorite subject.
- Civics is my favorite subject.
- Eight dollars is the price of a movie these days.

Pronoun Agreement

While we are talking about subject-verb agreement, we must also talk about agreement between pronouns and they refer to.

Whenever you use a personal pronoun **she**, **it**, or **they**, you first must establish its antecedent, the word that the pronoun is replacing.

Read this sentence:

Gustavo slowed to the speed limit when **he** saw the police cruiser in the rearview mirror.

The pronoun **he** replaces the noun **Gustavo**. In addition, a pronoun must *agree* with the noun it is referring to.

The general rule for pronoun agreement is straightforward: A singular noun requires a singular pronoun; a plural noun needs a plural pronoun.

Read these examples:

The **boy** scratched **his** armpit.

The **boys** scratched **their** armpits.

In most cases, you won't need to debate whether you need the singular or plural form. The spoken English that you have heard repeatedly will help you make the right pronoun choice when you write.

English unfortunately includes some *special* agreement situations. These will require more careful attention.

Each and every

In math, $1 + 1 = 2$. This rule applies to pronoun agreement as well. If you have 1 singular noun + 1 singular noun, then together they equal 2 things, making a *plural*.

Read these examples:

The woodpecker **and** its mate tried **their** best to oust the squirrel who had stolen **their** nest.

Ronald wanted the attention of the cheerleader **and** the baton twirler, but he could not make **them** look his way.

The plural pronouns **their** and **them** are logical choices for **woodpecker + mate** and **cheerleader + baton twirler**, respectively.

But the pronouns **each** and **every** can go either way.

Observe what happens:

The worker ant **and** bee drank **their** fill of nectar in the backyard garden.

Each worker ant **and** bee drank **her** fill of nectar in the backyard garden.

Every worker ant, bee, wasp, **and** mother hummingbird drank **her** fill of nectar in the backyard garden.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMAS (When NOT to use a Comma)

There are FOUR main reasons to use a comma. Each of those reasons for using a comma will be its own chapter.

FIRST, I want to talk about why NOT to use a comma.

WHY NOT TO USE A COMMA: DO NOT USE A COMMA WHEN YOU REALLY NEED A PERIOD.

What are fragments, run-ons, and fused sentences?

A **fragment** is a part of a sentence that is incomplete. A sentence fragment is a PART of a sentence. It does not have a subject and a verb. It might have a subject. It might have a verb. But if it doesn't have a subject that does the action of the verb, it is not a sentence.

What about run-on sentences and fused sentences?

Run-ons and fused sentences are sentences that have two sentences fused together into one.

Run-ons are just that—sentences that run on and on. Sometimes they use a lot of “and” or “so.”

Here is an example of a run-on:

We went to the restaurant but I didn't like it so we kept on going from restaurant to restaurant I wanted shrimp and none of the restaurants had shrimp besides they were too expensive so after a while I just decided to go home.

Here are some examples of fused sentences:

- *Dolphins have killed sharks they never kill humans.*

- *The shrimp was served with its head still on as a result Mary lost her appetite.*
- *The typewriter hummed loudly, consequently I turned it off.*

Let's take a look at what we need to do in order to fix these sentences. Here, it's important to remember what a sentence needs: a SUBJECT and a VERB. In the sentence below, the subject is repeated.

Dolphins have killed sharks they never kill humans.

Dolphins is the subject of the sentence. *Have killed* is the verb. But later on, we have ANOTHER sentence: *They never kill humans*. We need to write it like this:

Dolphins have killed sharks. They never kill humans.

Let's look at the next sentence:

The shrimp was served with its head still on as a result Mary lost her appetite.

Here we have two sets of subjects and verbs in one sentence.

The shrimp was served with its head still on as a result Mary lost her appetite.

We need to write it like this:

The shrimp was served with its head still on. As a result, Mary lost her appetite.

Let's look at the third sentence:

The typewriter hummed loudly, consequently I turned it off.

Here again, there are two sets of subjects and verbs in one sentence.

The typewriter hummed loudly, consequently I turned it off.

We need to write it like this:

The typewriter hummed loudly. Consequently, I turned it off.

SO DOES THAT MEAN ALL MY SENTENCES HAVE TO BE SHORT AND STUBBY, BECAUSE I CAN ONLY HAVE ONE SUBJECT AND VERB PER SENTENCE?

NO.

In the next three chapters, we will talk about ways that you can make your sentences long and luxurious, **WITHOUT** using fragments, fused sentences, or run-ons.

CHAPTER SIX: Using a comma with a list

Rule #1: put a comma between items in a list, including before the “and”:

*Kate was a talkative, outgoing, annoying, pedantic, **and** boring person.*

This rule, about *commas* and *and*, does NOT just apply to adjectives, but to ANY list:

*Kate was a talkative, outgoing, annoying, pedantic, **and** boring person.*

*She brought grapes, apples, waffles, **and** hamburgers to the staff picnic.*

CHAPTER SEVEN:USE A COMMA WITH INTRODUCTORY AND INTERRUPTING PHRASES

Rule #2: Use a comma with an introductory phrase. Use a comma with a phrase **IN THE MIDDLE** of a sentence that can be taken out, and the sentence still makes sense.

We don't only use one-word adjectives to give more information or description in a sentence. We also use groups of words, and these groups of words can come at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence.

Introductory phrases. We can add introductory phrases. Most often these introductory phrases tell us more about the time and place that the action happened:

This morning, Kate talked.

At the staff picnic, Kate talked.

In Norway, there are more than fifty nuclear reactors.

During World War II, more civilians died than any other war.

Note the comma when the phrase comes at the beginning of the sentence.

This morning, Kate talked.

At the staff picnic, Kate talked.

We need this comma even when the sentence expands further:

This morning, Kate talked about three things: sentences, commands, and commas.

At the staff picnic, Kate talked about sentences, commands, and commas.

Soon, everyone left because they were tired of hearing her talk about grammar.

COMMA NOTE: When the extra information comes at the beginning of the sentence, we need a comma, but when it comes at the end, we often don't:

Kate talked this morning.

Kate talked at the staff picnic.

Phrases in the middle. There are also certain types of phrases that give more information and can come in the middle of a sentence. One example is "who" phrases:

Kate, who was boring, pedantic, and annoying, talked nonstop about grammar at the staff picnic.

In the above sentence, notice that:

You can take out the phrase: who was boring, pedantic, and annoying, ...and the sentence still makes sense.

Also notice that you need commas at the beginning and end of the phrase:

Kate, who was boring, pedantic, and annoying,

AND BE AWARE:

The "who was...." phrase gives EXTRA INFORMATION. It isn't a sentence if you say:

Kate, who was boring, pedantic, and annoying,

You need to tell what Kate did.

Kate, who was boring, pedantic, and annoying, never stopped talking.

SHORTENED "WHO" PHRASES.

NOTE that sometimes the "who" part of a "who phrase: gets dropped:

Kate, who was a nonstop talker, bored everyone at the staff picnic by talking too much about grammar.

Suddenly turns into a shorter sentence:

Kate, a nonstop talker, bored everyone at the staff picnic by talking too much about grammar.

We can do this in a variety of circumstances:

Jermaine, who was never fond of sweets, refused the cookies.

Turns into:

Jermaine, never fond of sweets, refused the cookies.

OR:

The President, who was famous for his practical jokes, loved to prank his staff.

Becomes:

The President, famous for his practical jokes, loved to prank his staff.

Note that: *we still need the commas even though the “who was” part got dropped.*

WHICH phrases. “Which” phrases function exactly the same way as “who” phrases. The only difference is that they apply to things rather than people:

The picnic, which was boring because Kate talked nonstop about grammar, soon ended.

The pie, which was cooling on the window sill, was knocked over by the cat.

SHORTENED “WHICH” PHRASES. “Which” phrases can be shortened, just like “who” phrases:

The pie, cooling on the window sill, was knocked over by the cat.

The store, which had never been successful, went out of business.

Becomes

The store, never successful, went out of business.

CHAPTER EIGHT: USING A COMMA WITH A COMPOUND SENTENCE THAT HAS A FANBOYS VERSUS USING A SEMI-COLON

Rule #3: Use a comma with a FANBOY in a compound sentence.

One way to avoid run-ons and fused sentences is to create COMPOUND sentences using FANBOYS.

What's a FANBOY? A FANBOY is a *conjunction*. The FANBOYS are:

F-for

A-and

N-nor

B-but

O-or

Y-yet

S-so

You can use a conjunction, or FANBOY, to join two sentences (or, fancy word, independent clauses) that can stand on their own:

She was thirsty.

She was reluctant to spend \$5 on a soda.

Can be combined as follows:

She was thirsty, yet she was reluctant to spend \$5 on a soda.

She was tired.

She just wanted to go to bed.

Can be combined as follows:

*She was tired, **and** she just wanted to go to bed.*

She could go to the concert.

She could go to dinner with her friend.

Can be combined as follows:

*She could go to the concert, **or** she could go to dinner with her friend.*

She had been out all night.

She was exhausted.

Can be combined as follows:

She had been out all night, **SO** she was exhausted.

Notice there is a comma right before the conjunction, or FANBOY.

TEST YOURSELF.

Try combining the sentences below using the FANBOYS “and,” “but,” or “so.” Don’t forget to put the comma right before the FANBOY.

SET ONE

It was a rainy day.

They ended up not going to the beach anyway.

COMBINED SENTENCE:

SET TWO

She was sick.

She needed to see a doctor.

COMBINED SENTENCE:

SET THREE

He was sorry about the accident.

He didn’t think he should be the one to take all the blame.

COMBINED SENTENCE:

SET FOUR

I had a date to go to the movies.

I felt sick and had to cancel.

COMBINED SENTENCE:

SET FIVE

There was a minor problem.

The game was able to continue.

COMBINED SENTENCE:

SET SIX

She is a humble person.

She does not talk much about her incredible talent.

COMBINED SENTENCE:

Here is another way to avoid run-ons and fused sentences: JOIN TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH A SEMICOLON (;)

Notice that a semicolon can be placed where a period could go. We use a semicolon when we have two independent clauses that could stand as sentences on their own, but we want them to be one sentence, usually because the second part of the sentence follows logically from the first. For instance, when you look at SET ONE, SET TWO and SET THREE, above, the BEST set to write as one sentence with a semicolon would be:

She was sick; she needed to see a doctor.

The semicolon works here because her need to see a doctor follows logically from the fact that she is sick.

Some other examples:

Carla wasn't good at math.

She took two history courses instead of adding math to her schedule.

Can be combined as follows using the FANBOY and COMMA method:

*Carla wasn't good at math, **SO** she took two history classes instead of adding math to her schedule.*

OR the SEMICOLON method:

Carla wasn't good at math; she took two history classes instead of adding math to her schedule.

was flourishing but the rest of the lawn, unfortunately, was dying.

3. The hill was covered with wildflowers it was a beautiful sight.

4. As I turned around, I heard a loud thump for the cat had upset the goldfish bowl.

5. The artist preferred to paint in oils he did not like watercolors.

6. He looked carefully in the underbrush but he failed to notice the pair of green eyes staring at him.

7. I thought registration day would be tiring but I didn't know I'd have to stand in so many lines.

8. The dog, which was growling and snarling, snapped at me I was so frightened that I ran.

9. Professors are supposed to be absent-minded and I've seen plenty of evidence to support that claim since I've been in college.

Test Yourself. Place commas in sentences with two independent clauses and a FANBOY. Place semicolons in sentences that are just two independent clauses put together with no FANBOY.

1. . Mr. Leyland played the viola professionally for many years and he now conducts a community orchestra.
2. The crab grass

TRANSITION WORDS. One of the things you really need to know and use for the GED test is TRANSITION WORDS.

You can JOIN TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH A SEMICOLON AND A TRANSITION WORD.

There is one more twist on the sentence that is made up of two independent clauses and a semicolon. It goes like this:

Independent clause—~~semicolon~~—~~transition word~~—~~comma~~—independent clause.
For example:

*I realized at once that something was wrong; **however**, I was not the only person who was concerned.*

What is meant by “transition word”? Like FANBOYS, transition words show the relationship between ideas. Here’s a short list of transition words and phrases, with their general meanings:

- ❑ *Otherwise* (shows and “if” relationship between ideas)
- ❑ *However* (shows contrast between ideas)
- ❑ *On the one hand; on the other hand* (shows contrast)
- ❑ *Likewise* (shows similarity between ideas)
- ❑ *Therefore; As a result of; consequently* (shows cause and effect)
- ❑ *Before, First, Next, Finally,* (shows time or order of ideas or examples)
- ❑ *For example* (tells you an example comes next)

Another example of a sentence that follows this pattern:

*I had to complete the assignment by Friday; **otherwise**, I would have failed the course.*

OR

*The office was closed; **consequently**, I could not pay my bill.*

Test Yourself. Place commas and semi-colons where they belong.

1. The suspect said that he had never met the victim however, the detective knew that he was lying.
2. In the first place, it was snowing too hard to see the road in the second place, we had no chains.
3. I have read *Soul on Ice* but I have not read *The Invisible Man*.
4. San Francisco is my favorite city in fact, I plan to spend two weeks there this summer.
5. Large supermarkets fascinate me I can find everything from frozen chow mein to soybean flour in one place.

6. Ron and Mike were both in English class this morning they gave an interesting presentation on their research.
7. The obstacles are not insurmountable but they are real and formidable.
8. Riding a bicycle is excellent exercise I ride mine every day.
9. I am not interested in a trip to Asia this year however, I would like to go to Europe.

TEST YOURSELF: TRANSITION WORDS. Fill in the blank with the correct word:

_____ Tom scores a 100 on the final exam, he cannot pass College Algebra, a class he is taking for the third time.

- A. Because
- B. Since
- C. As a result,
- D. Unless

_____ Gene gave a good reason for canceling the trip, Paola gave an even better reason.

- A. Although
- B. Because
- C. Unless
- D. Since

Please make sure to put the food back in the refrigerator; _____ it will spoil.

- A. Unless
- B. Because
- C. Otherwise
- D. Since

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE EXERCISES with TRANSITION WORDS

For each blank, choose and write in the appropriate transition word.

1. We are having a big family reunion this summer. _____,
(Later, However, First)

My grandparents are coming from Arizona. _____,

My sister-in-law and her children are coming from Colorado. We'll all spend three days together. _____, my brother

will join us for two more days. _____, my aunt will fly in

from San Antonio for a big dinner celebration with everyone.
(Yet, For example, Finally)

2. I think Woody Allen is the funniest comic I have ever seen. He can write and perform slapstick humor. _____, he can write subtle and
(In addition, In conclusion)

touching comedy. _____ Allen's dialogues perfectly
(Also, However)
capture real-life expressions. _____,
(For this reason, For example)
Woody Allen is a comic genius.

CHAPTER NINE: FROM COMPOUND TO COMPLEX PHRASES USING DEPENDENT CLAUSES.

Comma rule #4: Use a comma with a dependent clause that comes at the beginning of the sentence

The makers of the GED test are very keen for you to use TRANSITION WORDS and PHRASES. But these are not just for the GED. When you use transition words and phrases, you make the relationships between your ideas clear. You can also make more elegant sentences.

What do I mean by make the relationships between your ideas clear?

We know that *but* means *contrast*. So does *however*, as well as *although*. When you use these in a sentence, you can show the reader that there is **contrast** between your ideas.

The same is true for *so*. *So* shows that there is **cause and effect** between two ideas. You can use *so*, or you can use *therefore*, *because*, *as a result of*, *consequently*, *for that reason*.

We have already seen that we can use transition words in the middle of sentence with a semi-colon. Here's how you can use them with dependent clauses:

What's an independent clause? An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence:

She walked to the bed.

She talked without stopping.

What's a dependent clause? A dependent clause can *almost* stand alone. ***A dependent clause is the same as an independent clause with a dependent clause word.***

So what's a dependent clause word?

There are a lot of them:

Although, when, while, since, because, after, before, during, as a result of, in order to, unless, according to.....

Just like the transition words we looked at in Chapter Five, dependent clause words quite often show relationships:

Time: *Before, After, During, While*

Cause and effect: *Because, Since, As a Result of, In order to,*

Contrast: *Although, on the one hand, on the other hand*

Conditional (something that may or may not happen): *Unless*

To understand what a dependent clause, look at the following:

When I woke up this morning

While Earl was fishing

While Elaine was reading

Do they sound like sentences to you?

The following is a sentence:

Elaine was reading.

...because it has subject and a verb.

The following is NOT a sentence:

While Elaine was reading

This is not a sentence! It has a dependent clause word in the beginning! It cannot stand alone. It needs an independent clause to be added to be a full sentence:

While Elaine was reading, Martians came.

OR

Although she really wanted to cook dinner, Elaine was reading.

OR

When Elaine was reading, Taylor went outside for a walk.

OR

Taylor went outside for a walk when Elaine was reading.

In the sentences above, notice the commas. When the dependent clause comes first, there is a comma.

Unless you go to school today, I am not going to buy you a new itunes card.

Although you are sleepy, you still have to get up.

When you talk to me like that, it just turns me off.

But you do not need a comma when the dependent clause comes at the end of the sentence.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE WITH DEPENDENT CLAUSES

Exercise 1: Complete the following sentences in a logical way.

Remember to add commas after a dependent clause.

1. When I woke up this morning

2. After I got to work

3. While Earl was fishing

4. While Jeff made dinner

5. Although the boy was sick

6. Although the room was full

7. If you have time

8. Before she went to sleep

Exercise 2: Rewrite the sentence by changing the order of the words and the placement of the dependent clause word.

Example: After I drank too much, I had a hangover I had a hangover after I drank too much.

1. Before he went home, he worked out at the gym.
2. After she analyzed the data, she wrote a report.
3. If you do not feel secure here, you should leave.
4. If it is good weather tomorrow, we will go outside.
5. When you feel sad, call me.

Test Yourself. For Questions 1, 2 and 3, place commas and semicolons where they belong.

1. Phuong wasn't worried at all about the exam because she had prepared so well over the break.
 - A. exam because, she
 - B. exam because; she
 - C. exam, because she
 - D. No punctuation is needed.
2. The UConn women's basketball program is among the nation's best however they play in one of the weaker conferences.
 - A. best; however, they
 - B. best, however, they
 - C. best, however; they
 - D. No punctuation is needed.
3. To impress Deepa, his date, Ryan worked hard over the chicken stir fry however she took offense that he had cooked meat when she said she was a vegetarian.
 - A. chicken stir fry, however
 - B. chicken stir fry however
 - C. chicken stir fry; however,
 - D. No punctuation is needed.

For additional practice, fix the fused sentences below. All of the sentences can be fixed in a number of ways. You can use a FANBOY, a semi-colon, or a dependent phrase. Don't forget your transition words and phrases to show the relationships between ideas:

1. Ellen had her hands full taking care of Stephen, he was at the age where he was full of mischief.
2. The sky turned gray bolts of lightning flashed in the east thunder rolled across the mountains.
3. Americans are more conscious of the need for fitness, they have become active sports enthusiasts, they are more interested in good nutrition, they are aware of the need to reduce stress.
4. Television can be entertaining, it can also be boring.
5. Children learn from their parents' examples parents' behavior is an important part of their children's experience.
6. The life of a farmer is a lonely one his opportunities to socialize are limited because of the constant attention he must give to the things he cultivates.
7. Oil imports are very expensive, we must learn to be economical in our use of energy.
8. Advanced methods of communication have made the world smaller, people are thus brought closer together, we find ourselves with common interests.
9. Some scientists call the computer essentially "stupid" others fear its capacity to "think."
10. College freshmen need help in making the transition from high school, the sheer size of most colleges can be a problem to new students.

CHAPTER TEN: AVOIDING WORDY, AWKWARD SENTENCES

On the GED, you will need to correct wordy, awkward sentences. You want to do this at college and in life, too!

So....

CHOOSE NON-REPETITIVE SENTENCES

FOR EXAMPLE:

In the sentence below:

The movie was much longer than we expected, and thus for that reason we canceled our dinner plans.

Notice that information is repeated.

*The movie was much longer than we expected, and **thus for that reason** we canceled our dinner plans.*

“Thus” and “for that reason” mean the same thing.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

The movie was much longer than we expected, so for that reason we canceled our dinner plans.

Once again, information is repeated:

*The movie was much longer than we expected, **so for that reason** we canceled our dinner plans.*

“So” and “for that reason” mean the same thing.

A SECOND EXAMPLE:

Overeating, or binge eating as it has been defined or called, is a national problem and a serious issue to be addressed.

Again, notice the repeated information:

***Overeating, or binge eating** as it has been defined or called, is a national problem and a serious issue to be addressed.*

“Overeating” and “binge eating” are very similar things.

*Overeating, or binge eating **as it has been defined or called**, is a national problem and a serious issue to be addressed.*

We do not need to say “defined” and also say “called.” It would be best to say either “defined” or “called.”

*Overeating, or binge eating as it has been defined or called, is **a national problem and a serious issue** to be addressed.*

“A national problem” and “a serious issue” are very similar. We can use ONE phrase such as: *a serious national problem*, and be more concise.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: AVOIDING MISPLACED AND DANGLING MODIFIERS

What is meant by misplaced modifiers?

MODIFIERS are words or phrases that give more information about the main action:

- ❑ A happy person
- ❑ The happy person who won the lottery (Maybe it would be shorter and more concise to say *the happy lottery-winner*?)
- ❑ The person who had finished dinner

Modifiers **have to be in the right place for the sentence to be clear**. If they are not, we sometimes don't know WHO is doing WHAT. For instance:

Buffy called her adorable kitten opening the can of food and filled the bowl.

Who is opening the can of food? Buffy? The kitten?

TO make the sentence clearer, we could write:

Opening the can of food, Buffy called her adorable kitten, then filled the bowl.

Buffy called her adorable kitten, opened the can, and filled the bowl.

More examples of dangling modifiers and their revisions:

INCORRECT: After reading the original study, the article remains unconvincing.

REVISED: After reading the original study, **I** find the article unconvincing.

INCORRECT: Relieved of your responsibilities at your job, your home should be a place to relax.

REVISED: Relieved of your responsibilities at your job, **you** should be able to relax at home.

INCORRECT: The experiment was a failure, not having studied the lab manual carefully.

REVISED: **They** failed the experiment, not having studied the lab manual carefully.

EXAMPLE

Now, look at the set of sentences below. Which one is NOT clear?

- A. Having finished dinner, the football match was turned on.
- B. Having finished dinner, Jorge turned on the football match.
- C. After Jorge finished dinner, he turned on the football match.
- D. Jorge turned on the football match after finishing dinner.

Which one is unclear? Why?

Answer: The first one is unclear. The subject of the sentence is **the football match**. But did the football match finish dinner? No—**Jorge** finished dinner. **Jorge** also turned on the football match.

EXAMPLE

Now, again, choose the sentence that is NOT clear:

- A. Playing video games on the computer for three hours, Philomena did not finish her paper.
- B. Because Philomena played video games on the computer for three hours, she did not finish her paper.
- C. Playing video games on the computer for three hours, Philomena's paper was not finished.
- D. Philomena did not finish her paper because she played video games on the computer for three hours.

What do you notice about the one that is unclear?

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE WITH MISPLACED MODIFIERS

Directions: Determine whether the sentences below contain misplaced or dangling modifiers. Fix any problems that you find.

1. Scrubbing the tile grout with bleach and an old toothbrush, the mildew stains began to fade.
2. To finish by the 3 p.m. deadline, the computer keyboard sang with Sylvia's flying fingers.
3. Slathering the popcorn with melted butter, the calorie count skyrocketed.
4. Tonya made the mistake of walking her boisterous bulldog Billy in high heels.
5. Too hungry to wait for Brenda's return from the restroom, the bowl of egg drop soup quickly disappeared.
6. Struggling with the tight jeans, the zipper would not budge.
7. Closing the hotel room door and pulling the heavy suitcase to the elevator, the relaxing beach vacation came to an end.

CHAPTER TWELVE: MAINTAIN PARALLEL STRUCTURE

What's parallel structure?

Parallel structure, the correct way to write, looks like this:

Students  ,  , and  .

Students  ,  , and  .

When you use parallel structure, each of the items in your list follow the same pattern.

Nonparallel structure looks like this:

Students  ,  , and  .

*Students **capped** their pens, **were closing** their notebooks, and **zipped** their book bags.*

TEST YOURSELF. Which one below, A, B or C, shows parallel structure?

- A. Barking dogs, kittens that were meowing, and squawking parakeets greet the pet shop visitors.
- B. Barking dogs, meowing kittens, and squawking parakeets greet the pet shop visitors.
- C. Dogs that bark, kittens that meow, and parakeets squawking greet the pet shop visitors.

Take another look:

- A. Barking dogs
Kittens that were meowing
Squawking parakeets

- B. Barking dogs

Meowing kittens
Squawking parakeets

- C. Dogs that bark
Kittens that meow
Parakeets squawking

ONLY B FOLLOWS THE SAME PATTERN FOR DOGS, KITTENS, AND PARAKEETS.

TEST YOURSELF

PARALLEL STRUCTURE Directions: Choose the sentence that has no errors in structure.

1.
 - A. Barking dogs, kittens that were meowing, and squawking parakeets greet the pet shop visitors.
 - B. Barking dogs, meowing kittens, and squawking parakeets greet the pet shop visitors.
 - C. Dogs that bark, kittens that meow, and parakeets squawking greet the pet shop visitors.

2.
 - A. During class, Samuel spent his time flirting with Brittney, eating candy, and doodling on the assignment sheet.
 - B. During class, Samuel spent his time flirting with Brittney, he ate candy, and doodling on the assignment sheet.
 - C. During class, Samuel spent his time to flirt with Brittney, to eat candy, and doodling on the assignment sheet.

3.
 - A. Alex looked everywhere for his math book—under the bed, on his desk, and he searched inside the refrigerator.
 - B. Alex looked everywhere for his math book—viewing under the bed, searching on his desk, and inside the refrigerator.
 - C. Alex looked everywhere for his math book—under the bed, on his desk, and inside the refrigerator.

4.
 - A. The manager wanted staff who arrived on time, smiled at the customers, and didn't snack on the chicken nuggets.
 - B. The manager wanted staff who arrived on time, would be smiling at the customers, and would not be snacking on the chicken nuggets.
 - C. The manager wanted staff who arrived on time, smiled at the customers, and no snacking on the chicken nuggets

5.
 - A. After giving Jeremy her phone number, Felicia had to tolerate his late night calls, stupid conversations, and requests for her math homework.

B. After giving Jeremy her phone number, Felicia had to tolerate his late night calls, the fact that he carried on stupid conversations, and requests for her math homework.

C. After giving Jeremy her phone number, Felicia had to tolerate being woken up late at night, having stupid conversations, and he constantly requested her math homework.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: MAINTAIN FORMAL LANGUAGE

On the RLA test, there will be one document in which you have to make corrections. There will be a drop-down menu, and you will have to choose the correct sentence. The final thing you need to be aware of in order to get these questions correct is to keep a formal, objective tone. What does that mean? Don't use words that you would use if you were texting a friend. Use language that you would use if you were writing a letter to a possible employer, the principal of your child's school, or to a store to complain about faulty merchandise.

EXAMPLE OF FORMAL, OBJECTIVE TONE:

(from a description of the Brown v. Topeka Supreme Court case)

In the mid-1950s, the NAACP challenged school segregation in a _____ of court cases.

In the sentence above, choose a word to fill in the blank that **best** maintains the formal, objective tone of the passage?

- A. bunch
- B. group
- C. series
- D. lot