

YHS Standard English Conventions Rule Sheet

1. RUN-ON/ SPLICE— A run-on sentence is two or more sentences improperly combined, often called a comma splice. (**Incorrect:** I like you, you like me. **Correct:** I like you__ You like me.)
2. FRAGMENT – A fragment is a piece of a sentence, one that is missing either a subject, a predicate, or both. (**Incorrect:** Walking in my new shoes. **Correct:** I was walking in my new shoes.)
3. APOSTROPHES – Apostrophes are used to show possession or to show a contraction. (**Incorrect:** Marys book doesnt have a cover. **Correct:** Mary's book doesn't have cover.)
4. SEMI-COLONS – Semi-colons are used to separate two RELATED sentences (two independent clauses) of equal weight and importance. Use a semi-colon as you would a comma in a compound sentence (#13). (**Incorrect:** I went to Europe; my brother is ten. **Correct:** I went to Europe; she went to Texas.)
5. SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT – Subjects should always agree in number with their verbs. (**Incorrect:** Each of the men have done the work. **Correct:** Each of the men has done the work.)
6. PRONOUN/ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT – Pronouns should agree with their antecedents (the words to which the pronouns refer). (**Incorrect:** Each of the girls did their work. **Correct:** Each of the girls did her work.)
7. PRONOUN CASE – Pronouns must be in the nominative, objective, or possessive case, depending on their use in the sentence (he/his/him, she/hers/her, I/mine/me, you/yours/your, they/theirs/their) (**Incorrect:** The teacher gave an A to Frank and I. **Correct:** The teacher gave an A to Frank and me.)
8. PARALLEL STRUCTURE - Express similar terms (all nouns, all verbs, etc.) in a list in the same structure (**Incorrect:** I like fishing, boating, and to camp. **Correct:** I like fishing, boating, and camping.)
9. VERB FORM - Use correct forms and tenses of verbs. (**Incorrect:** She has laid in bed all day. **Correct:** She has lain in bed all day.)
10. DANGLING AND MISPLACED MODIFIERS – A dangling modifier occurs when a word or phrase has nothing in the sentence to modify; a misplaced modifier occurs when a word or phrase seems to describe the wrong part of the sentence. (**Incorrect:** I found a dollar bill walking down the street. **Correct:** Walking down the street, I found a dollar bill.) (**Incorrect:** I found a letter to John Adams written by his wife at a garage sale. **Correct:** At a garage sale, I found a letter to John Adams written by his wife.)
11. ITEMS IN A SERIES (Comma) – Use commas to separate items (words, phrases, or clauses) in a series.
 - We have read poems by Longfellow , Whittier , and Dickinson.
 - We found seaweed in the water , on the sand , and in our shoes.
 - Everyone wondered who was in the house , what he wanted , and where he went.

12. COORDINATE ADJECTIVES (Comma) – Use commas to separate two or more adjectives that describe the same noun

- An Arabian stallion is a fast , beautiful horse.

13. COMPOUND SENTENCE (Comma) – Use a comma before the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, and *yet* when they join independent clauses.

- We wanted to go biking , but we couldn't decide where to go.

14. LONG PHRASE (Comma) – Use a comma after a long prepositional phrase, a participial phrase, or an infinitive phrase that begins a sentence. When several prepositional phrases are linked, use a comma after the final phrase in the series.

- In my parents' old camp , there is a squirrel's nest.

- Forced onto the sidelines by his torn ligament , John was restless and unhappy.

- To be the captain of the team , a student cannot have a code violation.

- At the top of the hill on the ranch , we found the lost calf.

15. DEPENDENT CLAUSE (Comma) – Use a comma after a dependent clause that begins a sentence.

- When March came , the huge ice pack began to melt.

16. TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS (Comma) – Use a comma after a transitional expression that begins a sentence, such as *however*, *furthermore*, *for instance*, *for example*, *therefore*, and *secondly*.

- However , I understand that a good education is based on more than academics.

- For example , Spirit Week is a way to promote positive school culture.

17. PARENTHETICAL ELEMENTS (Comma) – Use commas to set off nonessential elements such as parenthetical expressions, appositives, and other non-essential elements that interrupt the sentence.

- That book , as a matter of fact , is by the same author.

- Texas , the Lone Star State , is larger than Maine.

- Why , everyone knows what happened in 1776!

18. DIRECT ADDRESS (Comma) – Use commas when you directly address someone or something in speech.

- Bill , please remove your feet from the desk.

- I didn't know how fast I was going , Officer.

19. CONVENTIONAL SITUATIONS (Comma) – Use commas in certain conventional situations, such as dates, salutations and closings, addresses, and dialogue.

- Spring vacation begins on Friday , April 12 , 2008 , this year.

- Dear Aunt Margaret ,

- Sam moved to 286 Lincoln Road , Chicago , Illinois , last June.

- Bill said , "I never meant to hurt him."

20. UNNEEDED COMMA – Never use a comma between a subject and its verb, between a verb and its complement, or when a comma is unnecessary. Note that no commas should appear in the sentences below.

- What I could not believe _ was that he had never played before.

- Pam's best imitations include _ those of her mother and dad.

- Believing completely and positively in oneself _ is essential for success.)