



# Grammar Review

# Overview

- ▶ Instead of needing to know all of the grammatical rules in the English Language, for the ACT and SAT you will need a small subset of rules
- ▶ Recognize violations of those simple rules and you will Ace the SAT Writing and ACT English

# Common Errors

1. Subject – Verb Agreement
2. Tense of Verbs
3. Antecedent – Pronoun
4. Pronoun Case
5. Noun number agreement
6. Parallelism
7. Commas and conjunctions
8. Dangling Participles
9. Pronoun antecedent disagreement
10. Relative Pronouns
11. Adjective adverb confusion
12. Erroneous comparisons
13. Comparatives and Superlatives
14. Word Pairs
15. Usage errors
16. Redundancy
17. Idioms

# Subject-Verb Agreement

- ▶ My neighbor's dog eat my garbage from the trash can.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ My neighbor's **dog eat** my garbage from the trash can.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ My neighbor's dog eats my garbage from the trash can.

# Subject-Verb Agreement

- ▶ When subjects are next to verbs it is easy, so they often mix it up to confuse you.
- ▶ Try the following examples
- ▶ The book of poems are special to me.
- ▶ **The book** of poems **are** special to me.
- ▶ The new law, which regulates emissions of greenhouse gases and particulates, make businesses nervous.
- ▶ **The new law**, which regulates emissions of greenhouse gases and particulates, **make** businesses nervous.

# Subject-Verb Agreement

- ▶ Try the following examples
- ▶ Boston and New York is rivals in many sports.
- ▶ **Boston and New York is** rivals in many sports.
- ▶ Modifications to a student's schedule is not allowed after the first week of school.
- ▶ **Modifications** to a student's schedule **is** not allowed after the first week of school.
- ▶ Bordering the state of California is Oregon, Nevada and Arizona.
- ▶ Bordering the state of California **is Oregon, Nevada and Arizona.**

# Subject-Verb Agreement

- ▶ **Example answers**
- ▶ The book of poems is special to me.
- ▶ The new law, which regulates emissions of greenhouse gases and particulates, makes businesses nervous.
- ▶ Boston and New York are rivals in many sports.
- ▶ Modifications to a student's schedule are not allowed after the first week of school.
- ▶ Bordering the state of California are Oregon, Nevada and Arizona.

# Subject-Verb Agreement

## Special Circumstances

- ▶ **Each** = singular
- ▶ **The number** = singular, **A number** = plural
- ▶ **Gerunds (-ing words)** = singular
- ▶ **Collective nouns** (the government, the city of Boston, etc) = singular
- ▶ **Neither / nor** = singular
- ▶ Use context to decide singular or plural on words like statistics, athletics, economics, etc

# Subject-Verb Agreement

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ With singular nouns and pronouns (he, she, it) the present tense verb ending is **-s (-es)**.
- ▶ In plural situations there is no ending on the verb.
- ▶ Remember that words inserted between subjects and verbs or subjects placed after verbs are used to confuse you.

# Subject-Verb Agreement

- ▶ **Hints**
- ▶ When checking for agreement draw arrows between subjects and verbs to establish what agrees with what.
- ▶ Try crossing out any prepositional phrases or parenthetical clauses (phrases separated by commas) then rereading the sentence

# Verb Tense

- ▶ After he broke his leg, he leaves the team for 6 weeks
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ After he **broke** his leg, he **leaves** the team for 6 weeks
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ After he broke his leg, he **left** the team for 6 weeks

# Verb Tense

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ Keep your tenses consistent – if a sentence starts in one tense it should stay the same throughout

# Verb Tense

- ▶ Common mix ups they use
- ▶ **Will vs would** – will is not used with present tense, would is not used with past tense
- ▶ **-ing vs to \_\_\_\_** – if they give you one verb form try the other
- ▶ **Past vs had past** – if giving two past events in a sentence, the one that happened first gets “had” with it
- ▶ **Has or had** – usually doesn’t go with simple past tense form of the verb

# Antecedent – Pronoun

- ▶ After the town of Boxford adopted the conservation policy, they were less accepting of the developer's plans.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ After **the town** of Boxford adopted the conservation policy, **they were** less accepting of the developer's plans.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ After the town of Boxford adopted the conservation policy, **it was** less accepting of the developer's plans.

# Antecedent – Pronoun

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ The antecedent is the part of the sentence (usually a noun) that the pronoun refers to
- ▶ Hint: Usually this involves singulars vs plurals but there can be other issues so always find what the pronoun is referring to

# Antecedent – Pronoun

	Singular Nouns	Plural Nouns
People	He or She	They
People Possessive	His or Her	Their
Things	It	They
Things Possessive	Its (not It's)	Their

When a college athlete accepts money, **they**  
Violate NCAA rules.

# Antecedent – Pronoun

- ▶ **Other Situations**
- ▶ **One – One, You – You** – keep pronouns the same in the sentence
- ▶ **Vague or ambiguous pronouns** – you cannot have a pronoun without a clear antecedent
- ▶ **Do it vs do so**

# Pronoun Case

- ▶ Bill sat between Johnny and I at the game.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ Bill sat between **Johnny and I** at the game.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ Bill sat between **Johnny and me** at the game.

# Pronoun Case

- ▶ Explanation
- ▶ If you would replace the two people with **us** then you should use **me**, and if you would replace the two people with **we** then you should use **I**.

# Pronoun Case

- ▶ Hint
- ▶ If you have a preposition (to, towards, between, about) then you always use an object pronoun
- ▶ Object pronouns = me, him, her, us, them
- ▶ Subject pronouns = I, he, she, we, they

# Noun number agreement

- ▶ Tim and Jim want to be a model.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ Tim and Jim want to be a model.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ Tim and Jim want to be models.

# Noun number agreement

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ Make sure that singular nouns go together and plural nouns go together.

# Parallelism

- ▶ The instructor showed us how to sketch the face, add in shading and the use of perspective was also demonstrated.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ The instructor showed us how to sketch the face, add in shading **and the use of perspective was also demonstrated.**
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ The instructor showed us how to sketch the face, add in shading and **use perspective.**

# Parallelism

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ Everything within a sentence should have similar or parallel construction when listing multiple things. Look at verb forms especially but also sequences of nouns or pronouns.
- ▶ **Hint:** This can be tested on the two parts of a conjunction – make sure they are parallel as well

# Commas and conjunctions

- ▶ Comma Splice – comma between two clauses that are independent without a conjunction
- ▶ The desert is hot in the **day, it** is cold at night.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ The desert is hot in the **day, but it** is cold at night.
- ▶ When conjunctions are used be sure they are correct. **But, and, or ...**



# Dangling Participle

- ▶ While walking down the road, the big red truck caught the boy's eye
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ While walking down the road, the big red truck caught the boy's eye
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ While walking down the road, the boy saw a big red truck

# Dangling Participle

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ When you have a sentence with two parts separated by a comma, the second part must start with who or what was discussed in the first part

# Pronoun Antecedent Disagreement

- ▶ Each fish has their own habitat they live in.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ **Each** fish has **their** own habitat **they** live in.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ Each fish has its own habitat it lives in.

# Pronoun Antecedent Disagreement

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ The Antecedent is the word or phrase the pronoun refers to. The pronoun replaces the noun. The two must agree in number, person and gender.

# Relative Pronouns

- ▶ **Which vs Who / that**
- ▶ **Which** needs a preposition with it
  - In which, from which, to which
- ▶ **Which** is preceded by a comma, **That** is not
- ▶ **When** used for time
- ▶ **Where** used for places

# Adjective Adverb Confusion

- ▶ Sarah plays softball fearless.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ Sarah **plays** softball **fearless**.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ Sarah plays softball fearlessly.
- or
- ▶ Sarah is a fearless softball player.

# Adjective Adverb Confusion

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ Adjectives modify nouns, Adverbs (mostly words ending in **-ly**) modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs.

# Erroneous Comparisons

- ▶ Da Vinci's paintings were more three dimensional than painters before him.
  - ▶ Find the Error
  - ▶ Da Vinci's paintings were more three dimensional than painters before him.
  - ▶ Correct the Error
  - ▶ Da Vinci's paintings were more three dimensional than those of painters before him.
- or
- ▶ Da Vinci's paintings were more three dimensional than paintings of artists before him.

# Erroneous Comparisons

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ You must compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. Usually seen as people to people and things to things on the SAT and ACT

# Double Positives

- ▶ He was more busier once he got back into school full time.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ He was **more busier** once he got back into school full time.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ He was **busier** once he got back into school full time.

# Comparitives and Superlatives

- ▶ When studying Lions and Leopards, scientists determined that Lions were the fiercer and Leopards the strongest.
- ▶ Find the Error
- ▶ When studying **Lions and Leopards**, scientists determined that Lions were the fiercer and Leopards the **strongest**.
- ▶ Correct the Error
- ▶ When studying Lions and Leopards, scientists determined that Lions were the fiercer and Leopards the **stronger**.

# Comparatives and Superlatives

- ▶ **Explanation**
- ▶ When comparing 2 things use the **-er** form of the adjective and when comparing 3 or more things use the **-est** form of the adjective.
- ▶ 2 things = **more**, 3 or more things = **most**

# Word Pairs

- ▶ These word pairs always go together
- ▶ Neither... nor
- ▶ Either... or
- ▶ Both ... and ...
- ▶ Between ... and ...
- ▶ Not only ... but also ...
- ▶ As ... as
- ▶ More / less ... than
- ▶ Such / so ... That

# Rarely tested

- ▶ **Usage**
- ▶ The couple circumvented the globe on their trip.
- ▶ The couple **circumvented** the globe on their trip.
- ▶ The couple **circumnavigated** the globe on their trip.
  
- ▶ **Redundancy** – more common on ACT
- ▶ The man was arrested for illegally trespassing.
- ▶ The man was arrested for **illegally trespassing**.
- ▶ The man was arrested for **trespassing**.

# Commonly Tested Idioms

- ▶ debate over
- ▶ a lot
- ▶ a responsibility to
- ▶ a result of
- ▶ a sequence of
- ▶ agree with
- ▶ as an instance of
- ▶ as good as/or better than
- ▶ as great as
- ▶ as much as
- ▶ attend to (someone)
- ▶ attribute X to Y/X is
- ▶ attributed to Y
- ▶ based on
- ▶ believe X to be Y
- ▶ both X and Y
- ▶ centers on
- ▶ concerned with
- ▶ conform to
- ▶ created with
- ▶ defined as
- ▶ depends on whether
- ▶ depicted as
- ▶ different from/differ from
- ▶ distinguishes between X
- ▶ and Y
- ▶ distinguish from
- ▶ doubt that
- ▶ either...or
- ▶ enable to
- ▶ fascinated by
- ▶ forbid X to do Y

# Commonly Tested Idioms

- ▶ identical with  
in contrast to  
independent from  
indifferent towards  
modeled after  
(no) more...than/(no)  
less...than  
more than ever  
neither...nor  
not only...but also  
not so much...as  
prohibits X from doing Y  
potential to  
range from X to Y
- ▶ regard as  
regardless  
responsible for  
resulting in  
retroactive to  
so X as to be Y  
so (adjective) that  
subscribe to  
such...as  
the same to X as to Y  
to contrast X with Y  
to mistake X for Y  
to result in  
to sacrifice X for Y

# Commonly Tested Idioms

- ▶ **Hint**
- ▶ These often appear as prepositions in questions on the test