

THE GRAMMAR GAMES 2022

Presented to RWCA June 2022

Donna Tucker, CareerPRO Resume Center, Phoenix

Review

Do you remember?


1. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. “Linda makes appropriate and timely decisions when a patient’s health is at risk”.
- B. Led region in both sales and gross profit, earning company’s prestigious “Award of Lions.”

Why? What is the Rule?

Rule (B is right)

- Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks.



Periods always go inside quotation marks, right?

BONUS: There is one exception. What is it?

Answer:

Periods go outside the quotation marks when the sentence ends with a letter or numeral.

Examples:

- John was pleased that his term paper received an "A".
- The Olympic gymnast earned a score of "9".

2. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. *The Gregg Reference Manual* is one of the few books—perhaps the only book—you'll ever need to write résumés.
- B. Served as chairman from 3/15–12/19.

Why?

Rule (both are right)

- Use the em dash (as in A) to create a strong break in the structure of a sentence. Dashes can be used in pairs like parentheses. (Alt 0151 on PC numeric keypad)
- The en dash (as in B) means, quite simply, “through.” (Alt 5150 on PC numeric keypad)
- No spaces on either side of the dash.

3. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. The conference call has been scheduled for 9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
- B. Join us on Saturday, from 8–10 AM.

Why?

Rule (A is right)

- Use lowercase a.m. and p.m. and always use periods. (Lowercase is NCRW style and preferred by *The Gregg Reference Manual*.)
- Use the a.m. or p.m. on both sides of the time frame.

4. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. Created culture of high performance and achievement in stress-free work environment.
- B. Achieved and sustained double digit revenue growth.

Why?

Rule (A is right)

- Generally, hyphenate two or more words when they come before a noun they modify and act as a single idea. This is called a **compound adjective**.
- Note: The adverb *very* and adverbs ending in *ly* are not hyphenated. They do not describe the noun but rather the verb.

5. Which is right? (More on Hyphens)

- A. Worked with many non-profit entities.
- B. Promoted multi-cultural business relations.
- C. Taught in a self-contained classroom.

Why?

Rule (C is right)

- Self is usually hyphenated.
- Non is almost never hyphenated.
- Anti can be either.
- Inter or Intra are almost never hyphenated
- Multi is not hyphenated except in one instance – which one?

Even More on Hyphens

Some are hyphenated simply for clarity

Which of these need hyphens and where?

- Ready made
- Mother in law
- Multi million dollar
- Out of date
- Editor in chief
- Two thirds
- X ray
- Three and one half
- Re elect

6. Which is right? (Punctuation)

Bulleted Lists

- A. Skills:
 - Strategic Planning
 - Sales Forecasting
 - Market Penetration
- B. Demonstrate the proven ability to:
 - Identify new sales opportunities
 - Cultivate influential community relations
 - Develop highly productive teams

Why?

Rule (A is right)

- Use no punctuation after bullets that are not sentences (subject and verb) as in A.
- Use a period (full stop) after every bullet point that is a sentence as in B.

Tips on bulleted lists

- Use all sentences or all fragments, not a mixture.
- Yes, use a colon after the introductory word or sentence.

7. Which is right? (Capitalization)

- A. Reported weekly to president Jones.
- B. Reported weekly to company President.
- C. Reported weekly to John Smith, president.

Why?

Rule (C is right)

- Capitalize a job title that comes immediately before the person's name or is used as part of their name when addressing them.
- If the job title comes after the person's name, is preceded by a comma, or is used instead of the person's name, then it is generally not capitalized.

- A. Reported weekly to President Jones.
- B. Reported weekly to company president.
- C. Reported weekly to John Smith, president.

8. Which is right? (Capitalization)

Headlines

- A. Well-Respected Business Strategist
- B. Sales Expert with In-Depth Experience
- C. Results-driven Sales Executive

Why?

Rule (A is right)

- Capitalize both parts of a hyphenated word in a title or headline unless it is considered as one word (in-depth).
- Or is a compound numeral—Twenty-two, for instance.

9. Which is right? (Usage)

- A. With regards to your request for time off, I must first consult with the manager.
- B. With regards to your mother, the office will send her a birthday plant.

Why?

Rule (B is right)

- In the first sentence, “with regards to” does not mean concerning as you would want—that is without an “s”.
- But in the second sentence, regards with an “s” is a plural noun meaning best wishes.
- “With regard” is a more formal usage that mostly pops up in business writing, so keep in mind that you only want to use that “s” when you’re writing a get-well card.

10. Which is right? (Structure)

- A. Oversaw operations of the office, plant, and the training facility.
- B. Reported to executive management and board of directors.

Why?

Rule (B is right)

- **Parallelism** is the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a sentence.
- All the items in the first sentence should be preceded by “the” if any one is preceded by “the.”

11. Which is right? (Usage)

- A. There are fewer achievements to report in this department.
- B. There were less people at the networking event than last year.

Why?

Rule (A is right)

- **Fewer** is used when discussing countable things.
- **Less** is used for singular mass nouns (such as knowledge, luck, and work).

THE GRAMMAR GAMES – 2022

NEW PUNCTUATION ISSUES

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Colons

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12. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. We have two options: use a comma or leave the semicolon.
- B. When he travels, he goes to: Rome, Israel, and Egypt.

Why?

Rule (A is right)

- A colon is used after a full sentence or independent clause to introduce something that illustrates, clarifies, or amplifies what was said in the sentence that preceded the colon.
- A colon should not separate a noun from its verb, a verb from its object or subject complement, a preposition from its object, or a subject from its predicate.

More on the Colon

- When a colon introduces a complete sentence, you may capitalize the first word after the colon according to some style guides.
- Example:

We've been auditing for three days straight: The books will be in perfect order when we finish.



Semicolons

Donna Tucker, CareerPRO Resume Center, Phoenix



A semicolon is used . . .

- Mainly to separate independent clauses.
- With transition expressions (however, namely, therefore, otherwise, accordingly, etc.) – these are NOT conjunctions that can be used with a comma to separate two clauses.

13. Which is right?

- A. Choosing the correct punctuation can be tricky; there are so many to choose from!
- B. Choosing the correct punctuation can be tricky, there are so many to choose from!
- C. Choosing the correct punctuation can be tricky. There are so many to choose from!
- D. Choosing the correct punctuation can be tricky; punctuation is important to good writing

Why?

Rule (A is correct)

- But C is okay too.



A semicolon is also used ...

- To separate items in a series if any of the items already contain commas.
- With parallel dependent clauses if they are long or contain internal commas.

14. Which is right?

- A. The company will be represented on the council by Jane Doe, director of public affairs, Harry Mason, vice president of manufacturing, and Dan Stolz, director of People Operations.
- B. They promised that they would review the existing specifications, costs, and sales estimates for the project, that they would analyze Google's alternative figures, and that they would prepare a comparison on proposals.
- C. Next year, the company will open new offices in Bend, Oregon; Dayton, Ohio; and Bath, Maine.

Rule (C is correct)



ELLIPSIS MARKS

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15. Which is right? (Ellipsis Mark)

A. He could have easily saved the situation by . . .

B. During COVID, we could go to the movies, but ...

Why?


Rule (A is right)

- Ellipsis marks are 3 spaced periods, with one space before and after each period.
- Ellipsis marks may be used to indicate that a sentence trails off before the end.
- No terminal punctuation is used with ellipsis marks in this kind of construction.



COMMAS

Donna Tucker, CareerPRO Resume Center, Phoenix



The comma is a punctuation mark that separates words, clauses, or ideas within a sentence to clarify their relationship to one another.

16. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. Developed strong community relations built excellent rapport with civic leaders.
- B. Designed an inventory control system and established warehouse policies.
- C. Clarified company's vision, created systems and processes to meet goals.

Rule (B is correct) Why?

- A. Developed strong community relations built excellent rapport with civic leaders. (Run-on Sentence)
- B. Designed an inventory control system and established warehouse policies.
- C. Clarified company's vision, created systems and processes to meet goals. (Comma Splice)

- A **run-on sentence** doesn't separate any of its independent clauses with the punctuation that it needs.
- A **comma splice** incorrectly separates two independent clauses with a **comma**, instead of a **comma** and coordinating conjunction.



THE GRAMMAR GAMES 2022

Essential and Nonessential Elements

Donna Tucker, CareerPRO Resume Center, Phoenix

The Comma and Essential/Nonessential Elements

An essential element (also called restrictive) is a word, phrase, or clause that contains required information the reader must know in order to fully understand the sentence.

If you remove the essential element, the meaning of the sentence may change or be ambiguous.

A nonessential element (nonrestrictive) is the opposite.

- A **phrase** is a group of two or more words in a sentence related to each other or acting as a single unit but does not have a subject or a predicate (verb).
- A **clause** is a group of words in a sentence that have a subject and a predicate (or verb).

Essential (restrictive) elements in a sentence should not be enclosed in commas.

- “Solicited input from team member *who had in-depth experience in logistics.*”
- “There is *no doubt* about her honesty.”

Nonessential (nonrestrictive) elements in a sentence should be enclosed by commas. They could be clauses or phrases.

- “Solicited supplier input from company’s logistics operations manager, *who had in-depth experience.*”
- “There is, *no doubt,* a reasonable explanation for the chair’s behavior at the board meeting.”

17. Your Turn

- Identify and punctuate (if needed) the italicized groups of words below. Are they clauses or phrases? Are they essential or nonessential?
- 1. People *demanding special treatment* make me angry.
- 2. His brother *who is a health nut* runs five miles a day.
- 3. A friend of mine *who lives in Boston* loves the seafood there.
- 4. Mary Smith *always fascinated by rock music* records every Rolling Stones concert she attends.

Answers

- 1. Essential (restrictive)
- 2. Nonessential (nonrestrictive)
- 3. Essential (restrictive)
- 4. Nonessential (nonrestrictive)

A Little More on Restrictive/Nonrestrictive Clauses

- Although some writers use "**which**" to introduce a restrictive clause, the traditional practice is to use "**that**" to introduce a restrictive clause and "which" to introduce a nonrestrictive clause.
- When writing a restrictive clause, do not place a comma before "that."

Punctuating Restrictive/Nonrestrictive Clauses

- A broad rule you can apply to relative clauses in order to punctuate them correctly is that **restrictive clauses are never offset by commas**, whereas nonrestrictive clauses are.
- One way to remember this is that **nonrestrictive clauses are removable**, and commas mark the removable part of the sentence.

18. Which is right? (Punctuation)

- A. As a respected community business leader Jon Smith spoke at the conference.
- B. With confidence Jon Smith delivered a speech to the business group.

Why?

Rule (neither is right)

- Use a comma after an introductory clause or an introductory prepositional phrase.

Member Punctuation Question

Where to the commas go?

- Supported four credit union locations across California for this provider of payment processing solutions.
- Diagrammed user journeys (UI/UX), owned training, marketing, documentation, and process development for Chip Card Project.
- Consulted on fintech integration best practices; documented project requirements, test plans, training, implementations, and stakeholder communications, with 100% on-time completion for aggressive 6–12-month delivery windows.

Answer

Where to the commas go?

- Supported four credit union locations across California for this provider of payment processing solutions. (No need for commas.)
- Diagrammed user journeys (UI/UX), owned training, marketing, documentation, and process development for Chip Card Project. (Commas used in a series.)
- Consulted on fintech integration best practices; documented project requirements, test plans, training, implementations, and stakeholder communications, with 100% on-time completion for aggressive 6–12-month delivery windows. (This is good—using a semi colon to bring together two related thoughts; THEN, using commas for a series.)

What about that comma before “with”?

BONUS!

- What is the acronym that will help us remember the 7 coordinating conjunctions?

FANBOYS

- FANBOYS is a mnemonic acronym for remembering the seven most common coordinating conjunctions.
- Conjunctions connect equally important ideas in a sentence.
- Here are conjunctions that make up the acronym FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so.



GRAMMAR BOWL 2021

Odd and Ends

Donna Tucker, CareerPRO Resume Center, Phoenix

19. Which is right? (Structure)

A. Well-versed in budget and cost analysis, payroll management, and controlling expenses.

B. Implemented program to control budget, costs, and inventory.

Why?

Rule (B is right)

- Again, **parallelism** is the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a sentence.
- By making each compared item or idea in your sentence follow the same grammatical pattern, you create a **parallel construction**.

20. Which is right? (Dangling Modifiers)

- A. As an NCRW, our resume writing must reflect our expertise.
- B. Addressing the future, the operations budget reflected additional expenses.

Why?

Rule (neither is right)

- A **dangling modifier** is a phrase or clause that is not clearly and logically related to the word or words it modifies (i.e., is placed next to).
- Unlike a misplaced modifier, a dangling modifier cannot be corrected by simply moving it to a different place in a sentence.

21. Is it wrong to split an infinitive? (the basic form of a verb)

It is fine to split an infinitive in English. Most people regularly break this “rule” without even realizing it.

Examples:

- People tend **to immediately get** upset if you correct their grammar.
- Mary hopes **to always find** happiness in life.

Member Question:

- In the client's **current job** on a resume, some results are on completed projects while some projects that are notable are still ongoing.
- Is it appropriate to mix current and past tense on a job entry, or should you just have everything show as present tense since the client is still in that role?

The experts say ...

- The key is to be accurate. If in the current job and some things are ongoing and some things are completed, then it is okay to mix tenses. For example, "Hired to do XYZ... currently manage ABC"
- Where some writers go wrong is when they include a subheading that says something like "accomplishments" and then put some in present tense: If something is accomplished, it is not still ongoing.

Pet Peeve

Offer verbal and written communication skills

- **Verbal** simply means, "having to do with words."
- Use **oral** to **mean** "spoken instead of written."

Another Pet Peeve

Noun and verb agreement.

Riddle

Q: Why do dogs enjoy going to school?

A: Because **they** are the teacher's **pet**.

What are your pet peeves?

- Apart / a part
- Affect / effect
 - He effected better outcomes
 - An effect on the children
 - It affected the children.
- Conversate (yikes!) and ideate

Preferred References

- NCRW Study Guide
- *The Gregg Reference Manual* (11th Edition)
- *Barron's Dictionary of Business Terms*
- *Merriam-Webster's Guide to Punctuation and Style*
- Online subscription to *Daily Writing Tips*
<https://www.dailywritingtips.com/pro/?r=o5e>