Written communication in English is essential to achieving academic success in graduate school and beyond. Whatever your immediate and long-term academic and career goals might be, you will benefit from reviewing the basic elements of English grammar in order to ensure that your writing style is polished and professional. This interactive workshop will help you sharpen your writing skills and learn (or review) the proper use and rules of grammar in concrete contexts of reference and with relevant practice exercises.

Pre-test

https://goo.gl/vD8fD5

My advisor tells me that I have to improve my English writing skills...

...but how do I DO THIS?!?
What is Grammar, Syntax and Punctuation?

- **Grammar** is the set of language rules that you use, most of the time **unconsciously**, to create phrases and sentences that **convey meaning**.

- **Syntax** studies the way in which sentences are constructed. It is concerned primarily with **word order** and **word agreement** when words are used together in a sentence.

- **Punctuation** is used to create sense, **clarity** and stress in sentences. It also gives **structure** and **organization** to writing.
Determiners

- A determiner is a word or a group of words that specifies, identifies, or quantifies the noun or noun phrase that follows it.
- Determiners are functional elements of structure and not a formal part of speech.
- Do not confuse determiners with pronouns. They are used in different ways. Some examples:

  - the, a, an, this, that, these, those, my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their, some, any, few, little, more, much, any, every, one, two, three, first, second, third, last, etc.

Nouns

- A noun names something: a person, animal, place, object, or idea.
- Nouns can be proper or common, singular or plural. Most singular nouns are made plural by adding -s or -es.
  
    - Rose (name of a person) and rose (a flower).
    - Benford’s Law, NOT Benford’s Law (the theorist name is capitalized, but not the terminology).

- Collective nouns are considered singular, so keep an eye on subject-verb agreement.

  - The faculty is meeting now. The professor is meeting now. The professors are meeting now.

Pronouns

- A pronoun is a word that replaces a noun, and eliminates the need for repetition.
- Personal pronouns refer to specific persons or objects and can act as subjects, objects, or possessives.
- Do not confuse the possessive pronoun with the possessive adjective. Some examples:

  - I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they, me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them, mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs.
Verbs

- A helping verb (auxiliary verb) is used together with the main verb to express the action.
  - To be: am, is, are, was, were, be, been
  - To have: have, has, had
  - To do: do, does, did

I am reading another article for my thesis.
I have been studying over an hour.
I do not know the answer.

Verbs are either regular (where the past is obtained by adding -ed to the present tense) or irregular (which are found in tables).

- Verb forms:
  - Base/Present - Add -s to form third person singular (he, she, it).
  - Present Participle - add -ing.
  - Past - add -ed
  - Past Participle - add -ed. They can't be used as verbs by themselves. They must have a helping verb in order to make sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base/Present</th>
<th>Present Participle</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work or works</td>
<td>(am is are) working</td>
<td>worked</td>
<td>(has have had) worked</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbs

- Examples of some irregular verbs. The complete list can be found in your handout.

- Every verb has six tenses, and each tense has a simple form and a progressive form. An example for the verb work is presented in your handout.

Adjectives

- An adjective describes a noun or pronoun.

- Normally in English, the adjective comes before the noun. (Ex: I have a pretty house.)

- They can also be placed after linking verbs. (Ex: I am happy.)

- When several adjectives are used together, they must be arranged in a certain order (degree of adjectives).
Adjectives

The Degree of Adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determiner</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Qualifier</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>gorgeous</td>
<td>long-stemmed</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>silk</td>
<td>roses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>her</td>
<td></td>
<td>short</td>
<td>black</td>
<td></td>
<td>hair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>old</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td>sheepdog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>scary</td>
<td>little</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hunting</td>
<td>cabin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adverbs

- Adverbs **modify** verbs, adjectives or other adverbs and answer where, when, how much.
- They **precede** or **follow** the word they modify:
  - *Soon* we will leave for the conference. He spoke **nervously**.
- Adverbs can be used **between words** that form a verbal phrase:
  - He **will suddenly** get better.
- Many adverbs that modify verbs end in **–ly**. Some adverbs modify other adverbs:
  - turn **slowly**, **highly** recommended...
  - He spoke **too quickly**. **Quickly** modifies the verb **spoke** and **too** modifies the adverb **quickly**.

Prepositions

- Prepositions **connect** a noun or pronoun to another word in a sentence.
- A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words that begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun.
- Prepositions can act as **adjectives** or as **adverbs**. Some examples:
  - about, above, across, after, against, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, between, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, near, of, off, on, out, over, through, to, toward, under, up, with

Conjunctions

- **Coordinating Conjunctions** can be used with commas to create compound sentences:
  - for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.
- **Correlative Conjunctions** also join ideas, but they work in pairs:
  - both . . . and  
  - either . . . or 
  - neither . . . nor 
  - not . . . but 
  - not only . . . but also
- **Subordinating Conjunctions** join an independent clause to a dependent clause. That is, they join a clause that can stand alone with a clause that cannot stand alone. Some frequently used subordinating conjunctions are:
  - after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, since, so that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, whether, while.
Write a word for each of these parts of speech.

- adjective
- adjective
- noun
- plural noun
- game
- plural noun
- verb ending in "ing"
- verb ending in "ing"
- plural noun
- verb ending in "ing"
- noun
- plant
- part of the body
- a place
- verb ending in "ing"
- adjective
- number
- plural noun

Practice Exercise

Syntax: Sentence vs. Phrase

Sentence (independent clause)
- A sentence is a grammatically complete idea that can stand alone. Sentences are either simple, compound or complex.
  - I studied.
  - The professor arrived early.

Phrase (dependent clause, fragment)
- A phrase cannot stand alone as a sentence. It may be used to give extra information to a main idea (sentence).
  - until late
  - who is always late

Types of Sentences

- Simple Sentence = one subject + one predicate (aka, independent clause) that can express a complete idea.
  - The investigator examined the results.
  - The investigator concluded that the results were biased.
  - The investigator published his findings.
Types of Sentences

- **Compound Sentence** = simple sentence + simple sentence, joined together using punctuation or conjunctions.
  - The investigator examined the results, and he concluded that the results were biased.
  - The investigator examined the results. The he concluded that the results were biased.
  - The investigator examined the results and concluded that the results were biased. (**SIMPLE SENTENCE!!!!!)**

Types of Sentences

- **Complex Sentence** = sentence + phrase (aka, independent clause + dependent clause) joined through punctuation and conjunctions.
  - The investigator examined the results, concluded that the results were biased, and published his findings.
  - The investigator examined the results. The investigator concluded that the results were biased. The investigator published his findings.

Why is Punctuation Important?

**Let’s eat grandpa!**

**Let’s eat, grandpa!**

**COMMAS SAVE LIVES**

Commas

- Commas are used to denote a weak pause.
- They can join two independent clauses along with a conjunction.
  - The investigator examined the results, and he concluded that the results were biased.
- They separate non-essential information in a sentence.
  - Nonrestrictive Parenthetical Elements (in the middle of a sentence)
    - The professor, who lives in Mayagüez, published a paper.
  - Nonrestrictive Adverbial Phrases (at the end of a sentence)
    - The professor published the paper, and I suggested...
Colons

- Colons are used to introduce a strong pause within a sentence.
- They can be used before a clause which explains the previous statement.
  - The Bioengineering Department at UPRM is highly regarded; academic standards are high, the lecturers are competent, and the students enjoy the courses taught.
- They can be used to introduce a list.
  - There are three types of nutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, and fat.
  - The three types of nutrients are proteins, carbohydrates, and fat. (NOT CORRECT!)
- Do not use colons after the phrases "such as," "including," and "for example."

Semicolons

- Semi-colons represent a pause longer than a comma, but shorter than a full stop.
- They can join two independent clauses when they are related. They can also be used with transition words.
  - The investigator examined the results; he concluded that the results were biased.
  - The investigator examined the results, however, he concluded that the results were biased.
- They are used when separating items in a complex list that already include commas.
  - I visited Orlando, FL; San Diego, CA; and San Juan, PR.

Grammar Choices

- You can write a grammatically correct paragraph with simple sentences, but it might turn monotonous (boring!!).

In academic writing, most issues are related to:
- wordiness (overuse of determiners, noun-based phrases),
- run-on sentences,
- subject-verb agreement,
- parallel constructions.

Wordiness: Overuse of Determiners

The research by the global nutrition experts that reveals the scale of their food evolution, from those farm-fresh to factory-manufactured. That “real food” that has been replaced by salt snacks and sugary cereals, the industrially-made bread and desserts, the ready-meals and the reconstituted meats alongside these sweetened soft drinks.
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- Studying the size of a population also helps scientists understand how fast the population has grown and its rates. For example, fisheries scientists know that there are very few salmon, but do not have knowledge of this type of occurrence.

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Wordiness: Noun-based Phrases

- Studying population growth also helps scientists understand what causes changes in population sizes and growth rates. For example, fisheries scientists know that salmon populations are declining, but do not know why.

Subject-verb Agreement

- Subjects and verbs must AGREE with one another in number (singular or plural). Thus, if a subject is singular, its verb must also be singular; if a subject is plural, its verb must also be plural.

Subject: The student talk with her advisor. (talks)
Object: The student, who is wearing jeans, are usually on time. (is)
Object: The box of books are on the table. (is)

Parallel Construction

- In grammar, parallelism, also known as parallel structure or parallel construction, is a balance within one or more sentences of similar phrases or clauses that have the same grammatical structure (nouns, verbs, etc.).

  I like running, swimming and to dance.
  I like running, swimming and dancing.

  The students were underprepared, poorly behaved, and disrupted the class.
  The students were underprepared, poorly behaved, and disruptive.

  The paper discusses No Child Left Behind, how to teach effectively, and instructing with multimedia aids.
  The paper discusses No Child Left Behind benchmarks, effective teaching strategies, and multimedia instructional aids.
The Plant Kingdom
• Special assignment: All about Fungi

Students will be given a specific fungi so they can investigate further. They will have to write the name of the fungi, if it's edible or not, how does it grow/where on Earth can we find it, how does it beneficial or helpful, and pictures of the assigned fungi. Students will present it in class.

Practice Exercise #2

Agaricus subrufescens is a mushroom. It is edible. It grows in clusters along leaf litter. It is known as almond mushroom. It is found in America and Asia. It is beneficial. It stimulates the immune system. It is being used as an alternative cancer treatment.

Use everything you've learned to turn this information into a coherent, meaningful paragraph.

Post-test
https://goo.gl/44pVRH
References

4. https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/should-i-use-i/

Questions??

http://uprm.libsurveys.com/tiger
Password : 2018

- English Grammar Review for Graduate Students
- Edcel J. Cintron Gonzalez and Luisa I. Feliciano Cruz