

DIRECTIONS: Do the practice exercises in each section below **after** reading how to fix these five common grammatical errors.

ERROR 6: WRONG PRONOUN - FUNCTION

Choosing the wrong pronoun is a common error that makes your writing look sloppy. In a sentence, a pronoun serves three common functions: it acts as a subject (***I** heard a bang.*), it acts as an object (*Mom told **me** to take out the garbage.*), or it shows possession (*Do you like **my** new pants?*). Making errors involving possession doesn't happen very frequently. To fix errors with pronouns, you have to determine what function it serves in the sentence.

If the pronoun is doing something it is likely a subject. For example, ***Him** and Dave went out for a Slurpee.* isn't right. When a pronoun is separated from a noun or another pronoun by the word *and* you can easily determine if they are both right by repeating the sentence with only one pronoun or noun at a time. Try saying the each sentence aloud: Him went out for a Slurpee. Dave went out for a Slurpee. ***Him*** obviously sound wrong. It should be written as ***He** and Dave went out for a Slurpee.*

If the pronoun has something happening to it, then it is likely the object, like in *Dad gave \$5 to **her** and **I**.* *Dad gave \$5 to her.* Sounds okay. *Dad gave \$5 to I.* Oops! That is the culprit. Correct the sentence to read *Dad gave \$5 to her and me.*

Correct each of the following sentences which have errors with pronoun function.

1. Her and I are going to McDonald's later today.
2. Sally and me went to Falkland for Canada Day.
3. The last song was played by he and Danny.
4. He put the blame on we girls.
5. Have you or me ever been to this restaurant before?

ERROR 7: SUBJECT/VERB DISAGREEMENT

Subjects and verbs disagree when they are written in a sentence so that they don't agree in number. A singular subject must have a singular verb, while a plural subject must have a plural verb. Mixing them up makes things confusing for the reader. *The boys runs all the way to school* isn't correct because the subject, **boys** is plural while the verb, **runs** is singular. You must change either the subject or the verb so they agree and so your meaning is clear to your reader. Either *The boys **run** all the way to school.* or *The **boy** runs all the way to school.*

Correct each of the following which have errors with subject/verb disagreement.

1. My brothers likes to go for walks in the park.
2. The protest march are scheduled for 1:00 pm on Saturday.
3. These kittens is very cute.
4. The dogs was dirty after playing outside.
5. My wife want to go for a truck ride.
6. These yellow flowers is the nicest ones in the boquet.

ERROR 8: SUBJECT/VERB DISAGREEMENT - COMPOUND SUBJECTS

When you write sentences with a compound subject, it is sometimes hard to decide whether the verb should be singular or plural. When *and* separates a compound subject as in *Jim and John goes to work at 8:00 am every day.*, the verb always takes the plural form. So in the preceding sentence, *goes* should be *go* to be written correctly. When the compound subject is separated by *or* or *nor*, always make the verb agree in number with the closest noun or pronoun. So *Janice or Sally goes to work at 10:00 on Monday.* is written correctly because Sally is singular and so is the verb *goes*.

Correct each of the following which have errors with subject/verb disagreement.

1. Why does Sarah and Jasmine not get along any more?
2. Neither the other actors nor I were on stage when the curtain went up.
3. Either you or I is going to get in trouble for that.
4. Jenn and Paul is going steady.
5. Janice and Lucy is going to write a skit for the grad class.

ERROR 9: SUBJECT/VERB DISAGREEMENT WHEN INFORMATION SEPARATES THEM

When information separates a subject and verb it can be easy to forget to make them agree. Be sure to identify the subject of the sentence and make the verb agree with it. *My sisters, who are both younger than me, was having lunch together.* In this sentence, the subject, *my sisters* disagrees with the verb *was*. Sometimes it helps to remove the separating information to determine how the sentence should sound. *My sisters was having lunch together* makes it obvious that there is a problem. *Sisters* is plural, while *was* is singular. Rewritten correctly, the sentence reads *My sisters, who are both younger than me, were having lunch together.*

Correct each of the following which have errors with subject/verb disagreement.

1. The box for your Lego are on the floor behind you.
2. The scores from the tournament on the weekend is on the message board.
3. The cans that are full of garbage is at the end of the driveway today.
4. One of my best friends are coming to my party.
5. The list of scholarship winners are listed in the newsletter.

ERROR 10: USING THE WRONG MODIFIER

Nouns and pronouns are modified by adjectives. Adjectives are words that describe or give additional information about a noun or a pronoun. Adverbs describe a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. You can't use an adjective to describe a verb or an adverb to describe a noun or pronoun. Doing so makes your writing sound sloppy. Adverbs are easy to recognize, because many of them end in *ly*. The word *softly* is an adverb because it can be used to modify the verb *play*. *Dad asked Bill to play the guitar softly.* not *Dad asked Bill to play the guitar soft.*

Correct each of the following which have errors with the wrong modifier.

1. To win the election the candidates must campaign real hard.
2. I went to the dentist because my tooth was aching terrible.
3. By helping fight crime, Teen Crimestoppers did well for the community.
4. Gina poked him gentle trying to wake him up.
5. My brother snores loud when he is sleeping.