A LITTLE GRAMMATICAL GUIDE

JAM

CONTENTS

1.Writing Concise Sentences

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell. Brevity and clarity are much more important than your prose style.

Sentences.

A sentence should contain one idea, though that can be a complex or compound idea. The most obscure sentences in academic writing are sentences filled to bursting. If your writing lacks [clarity](#), check to see if a long, bad sentence might make two short, good ones.

This isn't to say that all sentences should be short. Long sentences add variety, and some ideas are too complicated to fit into seven words. But don't turn your simple ideas into monstrous sentences, devouring line after line without mercy. One idea, one sentence.

Shibboleths.

And now bow your heads for a reading from the Book of Judges:

And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan. (Judges 12:5-6)

The original shibboleth was an arbitrary word that Jephthah used to spot his enemies: the Ephraimites had trouble with the sh sound, and when asked to pronounce a word with sh in it, they revealed they were enemy spies. I suspect few readers of this guide are Ephraimites eager to avoid Gileadite detection, but the story has some modern relevance. The shibboleth provides a handy way to think about language in general.

In its modern sense, a shibboleth is some mannerism, usually linguistic, that reveals your origins — and usually without your being aware of it. Some, like the original shibboleth, are matters of pronunciation. It's easy to spot many of the broad differences between American and English accents, but countless little variations are caught only by the most careful listeners. Most Americans, for instance, tend to pronounce the word been as if it were bin, whereas the English (and other Brits and many Canadians) tend to say bean. Americans tend to vocalize the letter t between vowels, pronouncing latter as if it were ladder; in Britspeak the two are clearly different. When Americans try to do English accents (and vice versa), they often miss these little details.

Shibboleths can distinguish not only nationalities but regions. In a Hitchcock

movie (I'm dashed if I can remember which) a plot point depends on the pronunciation of the word insurance: emphasizing the first syllable rather than the second is characteristic of the American South. The so-called "pin-pen vowel" can identify someone from southern Ohio, central Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, or Texas. I grew up in southern New Jersey, and can spot fellow south Jerseyans by their pronunciation of water, which sounds to the rest of the world like wooder.

Economy.

A distinguishing mark of clear and forceful writing is economy of [style](#) — using no more words than necessary. Bureaucratic and academic writing likes to pad every sentence with It should continuously be remembered thats and Moreover, it has been previously indicateds. Don't: it makes for slow reading. After you write a sentence, look it over and ask whether the sense would be damaged by judicious trimming. If not, start cutting, because the shorter version is usually better. Become friendly with the "Delete Word" option on your word processor.

Academies.

Some countries have official bodies to issue rules on linguistic matters: the Académie Française in France and the Accademia della Crusca in Italy are the most famous. The Académie fought long and hard against le weekend, preferring the native French fin de semaine. But most Frenchies simply ignore the official ruling, and use the familiar English word. Other common French words include le showbiz and les bluejeans.

The Accademia della Crusca has been a little more tolerant on the whole: the most recent supplement to the official Italian dictionary, for instance, includes "Millennium bug," derived "Dall'inglese millennium 'millennio' e bug 'insetto,'" and defined as "errore di programmazione che, al passaggio di millennio, ha impedito in alcuni vecchi programmi di riconoscere il cambiamento di data, provocando il blocco dei sistemi informatici."

1.1. Reducing Clauses to Phrases, Phrases to Single Words

Be alert for clauses or phrases that can be pared to simpler, shorter constructions. The "which clause" can often be shortened to a simple adjective. (Be careful, however, not to lose some needed emphasis by over-pruning; the word "which," which is sometimes necessary [as it is in this sentence], is not evil.)

- Smith College, which was founded in 1871, is the premier all-women's college in the United States.
- Founded in 1871, Smith College is the premier all-women's college in the United States.
- Citizens who knew what was going on voted him out of office.
- Knowledgeable citizens voted him out of office.

- Recommending that a student copy from another student's paper is not something he would recommend.
- He wouldn't recommend that a student copy from another student's paper. (Or "He would never tell a student to copy . . . .")

Phrases, too, can sometimes be trimmed, sometimes to a single word.

- Unencumbered by a sense of responsibility, Jasion left his wife with forty-nine kids and a can of beans.
- Jasion irresponsibly left his wife with forty-nine kids and a can of beans. (Or leave out the word altogether and let the act speak for itself.)

A frequently asked question about conjunctions is whether and or but can be used at the beginning of a sentence. This is what R.W. Burchfield has to say about this use of and:

There is a persistent belief that it is improper to begin a sentence with And, but this prohibition has been cheerfully ignored by standard authors from Anglo-Saxon times onwards. An initial And is a useful aid to writers as the narrative continues.

The same is true with the conjunction but. A sentence beginning with and or but will tend to draw attention to itself and its transitional function. Writers should examine such sentences with two questions in mind: (1) would the sentence and paragraph function just as well without the initial conjunction? (2) should the sentence in question be connected to the previous sentence? If the initial conjunction still seems appropriate, use it.

2.Verb.

It's probably better to avoid split infinitives whenever possible. Adverbs often insinuate themselves between the to and the verb, as in "To boldly go where no man has gone before," or "To always keep a watch on your bag."

Passive Voice.

There are two problems with the passive voice. The first is that sentences often become dense and clumsy when they're filled with passive constructions. The more serious danger of the passive voice, though, is that it lets the writer shirk the responsibility of providing a subject for the verb. *(see appendix for Modals)

2.1.Subjunctives.

The English subjunctive still shows up in a few places, of which the condition contrary to fact is most common:

- Conditions contrary to fact: "If I were a rich man." (I teach English; Lord knows I ain't rich.) We use were instead of the expected is, am, or are: "If this were any heavier [but it's not — a condition contrary to fact], I couldn't lift it"; "If she were to say that [but she's not], I'd leave."
- Suppositions: "If I were to tell you, I'd have to kill you"; "Be that as it

may."

- Wishes: "I wish I had an Illudium PU-36 Explosive Space Modulator"; "I wish she were six inches taller."
- Demands and suggestions: "I insisted that he leave"; "I suggested he leave."
- Necessity or importance: "It's essential that he arrive on time."

3.Prepositions

You may have learned that ending a sentence with a preposition is a serious breach of grammatical etiquette. It doesn't take a grammarian to spot a sentence-ending preposition, so this is an easy rule to get caught up on (!). Although it is often easy to remedy the offending preposition, sometimes it isn't, and repair efforts sometimes result in a clumsy sentence. "Indicate the book you are quoting from" is not greatly improved with "Indicate from which book you are quoting."

Based on shaky historical precedent, the rule itself is a latecomer to the rules of writing. Those who dislike the rule are fond of recalling Churchill's rejoinder: "That is nonsense up with which I shall not put." We should also remember the child's complaint: "What did you bring that book that I don't like to be read to out of up for?"

3.1.Prepositions of Time: at, on, and in

We use at to designate specific times.
The train is due at 12:15 p.m.
We use on to designate days and dates.
My brother is coming on Monday.
We're having a party on the Fourth of July.
We use in for nonspecific times during a day, a month, a season, or a year.
She likes to jog in the morning.
It's too cold in winter to run outside.
He started the job in 1971.
He's going to quit in August.

3.2.Prepositions of Place: at, on, and in

We use at for specific addresses.
Grammar English lives at 55 Boretz Road in Durham.
We use on to designate names of streets, avenues, etc.
Her house is on Boretz Road.
And we use in for the names of land-areas (towns, counties, states, countries, and continents).
She lives in Durham.
Durham is in Windham County.
Windham County is in Connecticut.

IN	AT	ON	NO PREPOSITION
(the) bed*	class*	the bed*	downstairs
the bedroom	home	the ceiling	downtown
the car	the library*	the floor	inside
(the) class*	the office	the horse	outside
the library*	school*	the plane	upstairs
school*	work	the train	uptown

* You may sometimes use different prepositions for these locations.

3.3. Prepositions of Movement: to and No Preposition

We use to in order to express movement toward a place.

They were driving to work together.

She's going to the dentist's office this morning.

Toward and towards are also helpful prepositions to express movement. These are simply variant spellings of the same word; use whichever sounds better to you.

We're moving toward the light.

This is a big step towards the project's completion.

With the words home, downtown, uptown, inside, outside, downstairs, upstairs, we use no preposition.

Grandma went upstairs

Grandpa went home.

They both went outside.

3.4. Prepositions of Time: for and since

We use for when we measure time (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years).

He held his breath for seven minutes.

She's lived there for seven years.

The British and Irish have been quarreling for seven centuries.

We use since with a specific date or time.

He's worked here since 1970.

She's been sitting in the waiting room since two-thirty.

3.5. Idiomatic Expressions with Prepositions

- agree to a proposal, with a person, on a price, in principle
- argue about a matter, with a person, for or against a proposition
- compare to to show likenesses, with to show differences (sometimes similarities)
- correspond to a thing, with a person

- differ from an unlike thing, with a person
- live at an address, in a house or city, on a street, with other people

3.6.Unnecessary Prepositions

In everyday speech, we fall into some bad habits, using prepositions where they are not necessary. It would be a good idea to eliminate these words altogether, but we must be especially careful not to use them in formal, academic prose.
- She met ~~up with~~ the new coach in the hallway.
- The book fell off ~~of~~ the desk.
- He threw the book out ~~of~~ the window.
- She wouldn't let the cat inside ~~of~~ the house. [or use "in"]
- Where did they go ~~to~~?
- Put the lamp in back of the couch. [use "behind" instead]
- Where is your college ~~at~~?

4.Articles, Determiners, and Quantifiers.

The is used with specific nouns. The is required when the noun it refers to represents something that is one of a kind:

The is required when the noun it refers to represents something in the abstract:

The is required when the noun it refers to represents something named earlier in the text.

We use a before singular count-nouns that begin with consonants (a cow, a barn, a sheep); we use an before singular count-nouns that begin with vowels or vowel-like sounds (an apple, an urban blight, an open door). Words that begin with an h sound often require an a (as in a horse, a history book, a hotel), but if an h-word begins with an actual vowel sound, use an an (as in an hour, an honor). We would say a useful device and a union matter because the u of those words actually sounds like yoo (as opposed, say, to the u of an ugly incident). The same is true of a European and a Euro (because of that consonantal "Yoo" sound). We would say a once-in-a-lifetime experience or a one-time hero because the words once and one begin with a w sound (as if they were spelled wuntz and won).

4.1.Determiners: Each, Every

Each and every have similar but not always identical meanings.
Each = every one separately
Every = each, all
Sometimes, each and every have the same meaning:
- Prices go up each year.
- Prices go up every year.
But often they are not exactly the same.
Each expresses the idea of 'one by one'. It emphasizes individuality.

Every is half-way between each and all. It sees things or people as singular, but in a group or in general.

Consider the following:
- Every artist is sensitive.
- Each artist sees things differently.
- Every soldier saluted as the President arrived.
- The President gave each soldier a medal.

Each can be used in front of the verb:
- The soldiers each received a medal.

Each can be followed by 'of':
- The President spoke to each of the soldiers.
- He gave a medal to each of them.

Every cannot be used for 2 things. For 2 things, each can be used:
- He was carrying a suitcase in each hand.

Every is used to say how often something happens:
- There is a plane to Bangkok every day.
- The bus leaves every hour.

Verbs with each and every are always conjugated in the singular.

4.2.Determiners: Some, Any

Some = a little, a few or a small number or amount

Any = one, some or all

Usually, we use some in positive (+) sentences and any in negative (-) and question (?) sentences.

	SOME	ANY	EXAMPLES
+	I have some money		I have $10.
-		I don't have any money.	I don't have $1 and I don't have $10 and I don't have $1,000,000. I have $0.
?		Do you have any money?	Do you have $1 or $10 or $1,000,000?

In general, we use something/anything and somebody/anybody in the same way as some/any.

Look at these examples:
- He needs some stamps.
- I must go. I have some homework to do.
- I'm thirsty. I want something to drink.
- I can see somebody coming.

- He doesn't need any stamps.
- I can stay. I don't have any homework to do.
- I'm not thirsty. I don't want anything to drink.
- I can't see anybody coming.
- Does he need any stamps?
- Do you have any homework to do?
- Do you want anything to drink?
- Can you see anybody coming?

We use any in a positive sentence when the real sense is negative.
- I refused to give them any money. (I did not give them any money)
- She finished the test without any difficulty. (she did not have any difficulty)

Sometimes we use some in a question, when we expect a positive YES answer. (We could say that it is not a real question, because we think we know the answer already.)
- Would you like some more tea?
- Could I have some sugar, please?

5.Adverbs

An adverb is a word that tells us more about a verb. An adverb "qualifies" or "modifies" a verb (The man ran quickly). But adverbs can also modify adjectives (Tara is really beautiful), or even other adverbs (It works very well).

The principal job of an adverb is to modify (give more information about) verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. In the following examples, the adverb is in bold and the word that it modifies is in italics.
- Modify a verb:
  - John speaks loudly. (How does John speak?)
  - Mary lives locally. (Where does Mary live?)
  - She never smokes. (When does she smoke?)
- Modify an adjective:
  - He is really handsome.
- Modify another adverb:
  - She drives incredibly slowly.

But adverbs have other functions, too. They can:
- Modify a whole sentence:
  - Obviously, I can't know everything.
- Modify a prepositional phrase:
  - It's immediately inside the door.

Many adverbs end in -ly. We form such adverbs by adding -ly to the adjective. Here are some examples:
- quickly, softly, strongly, honestly, interestingly

But not all words that end in -ly are adverbs. "Friendly", for example, is an adjective.

Some adverbs have no particular form, for example:

- well, fast, very, never, always, often, still

Adverbs have three main positions in the sentence:

- Front (before the subject):
  - Now we will study adverbs.
- Middle (between the subject and the main verb):
  - We often study adverbs.
- End (after the verb or object):
  - We study adverbs carefully.

5.1.Adverbs of Frequency

Adverbs of Frequency answer the question "How often?" or "How frequently?" They tell us how often somebody does something.

Adverbs of frequency come before the main verb (except the main verb "to be"):

- We usually go shopping on Saturday.
- I have often done that.
- She is always late.

Occasionally, sometimes, often, frequently and usually can also go at the beginning or end of a sentence:

- Sometimes they come and stay with us.
- I play tennis occasionally.

Rarely and seldom can also go at the end of a sentence (often with "very"):

- We see them rarely.
- John eats meat very seldom.

(100%   always usually frequently often 50% sometimes occasionally rarely seldom hardly ever 0% never)

6.Prepositions

6.1.English Prepositions List

There are about 150 prepositions in English. Yet this is a very small number when you think of the thousands of other words (nouns, verbs etc). Prepositions are important words. We use individual prepositions more frequently than other individual words. In fact, the prepositions of, to and in are among the ten most frequent words in English. Here is a short list of 70 of the more common one-word prepositions. Many of these prepositions have more than one meaning. Please refer to a dictionary for precise meaning and usage.

aboard	around	beyond	excluding	of	regarding	underneath
about	as	but	following	off	round	unlike
above	at	by	for	on	save	until
across	before	concerning	from	onto	since	up
after	behind	considering	in	opposite	than	upon
against	below	despite	inside	outside	through	versus
along	beneath	down	into	over	to	via
amid	beside	during	like	past	toward	with
among	besides	except	minus	per	towards	within
anti	between	excepting	near	plus	under	without

6.2.English Preposition Rule

There is one very simple rule about prepositions. And, unlike most rules, this rule has no exceptions.

Rule

A preposition is followed by a "noun". It is never followed by a verb.

By "noun" we include:

- noun (dog, money, love)
- proper noun (name) (Bangkok, Mary)
- pronoun (you, him, us)
- noun group (my first job)
- gerund (swimming)

A preposition cannot be followed by a verb. If we want to follow a preposition by a verb, we must use the "-ing" form which is really a gerund or verb in noun form.

Quick Quiz: In the following sentences, why is "to" followed by a verb? That should be impossible, according to the above rule:

- I would like to go now.
- She used to smoke.

Answer to Quick Quiz: In these sentences, "to" is **not** a preposition. It is part of the **infinitive** ("to go", "to smoke").

7.The comma.

7.1.Rules for Comma Usage

And what does a comma do, a comma does nothing but make easy a thing that if you like it enough is easy enough without the comma. A long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it and the comma, well at the most a comma is a poor period that lets you stop and take a breath but if you want to take a breath you ought to know yourself that you want to take a breath. It is not like stopping altogether has something to do with going on, but taking a breath well you are always taking a breath and

why emphasize one breath rather than another breath. Anyway that is the way I felt about it and I felt that about it very very strongly. And so I almost never used a comma. The longer, the more complicated the sentence the greater the number of the same kinds of words I had following one after another, the more the very more I had of them the more I felt the passionate need of their taking care of themselves by themselves and not helping them, and thereby enfeebling them by putting in a comma.

So that is the way I felt about punctuation in prose, in poetry it is a little different but more so … Gertrude Stein from « Lectures in America »

Use a comma to separate the elements in a series (three or more things), including the last two. "He hit the ball, dropped the bat, and ran to first base." You may have learned that the comma before the "and" is unnecessary, which is fine if you're in control of things. However, there are situations in which, if you don't use this comma (especially when the list is complex or lengthy), these last two items in the list will try to glom together (like macaroni and cheese). Using a comma between all the items in a series, including the last two, avoids this problem. This last comma—the one between the word "and" and the preceding word—is often called the serial comma or the Oxford comma. In newspaper writing, incidentally, you will seldom find a serial comma, but that is not necessarily a sign that it should be omitted in academic prose: Ulysses spent his summer studying basic math, writing, and reading comprehension. A comma is also used with but when expressing a contrast: This is a useful rule, but difficult to remember.

Use a comma + a little conjunction (and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so) to connect two independent clauses, as in "He hit the ball well, but he ran toward third base.". The comma is always correct when used to separate two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction.

Contending that the coordinating conjunction is adequate separation, some writers will leave out the comma in a sentence with short, balanced independent clauses (such as we see in the example just given). If there is ever any doubt, however, use the comma, as it is always correct in this situation.

One of the most frequent errors in comma usage is the placement of a comma after a coordinating conjunction. We cannot say that the comma will always come before the conjunction and never after, but it would be a rare event, indeed, that we need to follow a coordinating conjunction with a comma. When speaking, we do sometimes pause after the little conjunction, but there is seldom a good reason to put a comma there.

Use a comma to set off introductory elements, as in "Running toward third base, he suddenly realized how stupid he looked."

It is permissible to omit the comma after a brief introductory element if the omission does not result in confusion or hesitancy in reading. If there is ever any doubt, use the comma, as it is always correct. If you would like some additional guidelines on using a comma after introductory elements, click HERE.

Use a comma to set off parenthetical elements, as in "The Founders Bridge, which spans the Connecticut River, is falling down." By "parenthetical element," we mean a part of a sentence that can be removed without changing the essential meaning of that sentence. The parenthetical element is sometimes called "added information." This is the most difficult rule in punctuation because it is sometimes unclear what is "added" or "parenthetical" and what is essential to the meaning of a sentence.

Appositives are almost always treated as parenthetical elements.
- Calhoun's ambition, to become a goalie in professional soccer, is within his reach.
- Eleanor, his wife of thirty years, suddenly decided to open her own business.

Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives. You could think of this as "That tall, distinguished, good looking fellow" rule (as opposed to "the little old lady"). If you can put an and or a but between the adjectives, a comma will probably belong there. For instance, you could say, "He is a tall and distinguished fellow" or "I live in a very old and run-down house." So you would write, "He is a tall, distinguished man" and "I live in a very old, run-down house." But you would probably not say, "She is a little and old lady," or "I live in a little and purple house," so commas would not appear between little and old or between little and purple.

When a coordinating conjunction is used to connect all the elements in a series, a comma is not used: Presbyterians and Methodists and Baptists are the prevalent Protestant congregations in Oklahoma.

Use a comma to set off quoted elements. Because we don't use quoted material all the time, even when writing, this is probably the most difficult rule to remember in comma usage. It is a good idea to find a page from an article that uses several quotations, photocopy that page, and keep it in front of you as a model when you're writing. Generally, use a comma to separate quoted material from the rest of the sentence that explains or introduces the quotation:
- Summing up this argument, Peter Coveney writes, "The purpose and strength of the romantic image of the child had been above all to establish a relation between childhood and adult consciousness."

If an attribution of a quoted element comes in the middle of the quotation, two commas will be required. But be careful not to create a comma splice in so doing.
- "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many things."
- "I should like to buy an egg, please," she said timidly. "How do you sell them?"

Be careful not to use commas to set off quoted elements introduced by the word that or quoted elements that are embedded in a larger structure:
- Peter Coveney writes that "[t]he purpose and strength of . . ."
- We often say "Sorry" when we don't really mean it.

And, instead of a comma, use a colon to set off explanatory or introductory language from a quoted element that is either very formal or long (especially if it's longer than one sentence):

- Peter Coveney had this to say about the nineteenth-century's use of children in fiction: "The purpose and strength of . . . . "

Use commas to set off phrases that express contrast.

- Some say the world will end in ice, not fire.
- It was her money, not her charm or personality, that first attracted him.
- The puppies were cute, but very messy.

(Some writers will leave out the comma that sets off a contrasting phrase beginning with but.)

Use a comma to avoid confusion. This is often a matter of consistently applying rule #3.

- For most the year is already finished.
- For most, the year is already finished.
- Outside the lawn was cluttered with hundreds of broken branches.
- Outside, the lawn was cluttered with hundreds of broken branches.

Grammar English's Famous Rule of Punctuation: Never use only one comma between a subject and its verb. Typographical Reasons: Between a city and a state [Hartford, Connecticut], a date and the year [June 15, 1997], a name and a title when the title comes after the name [Bob Downey, Professor of English], in long numbers [5,456,783 and $14,682], etc. Although you will often see a comma between a name and suffix — Bob Downey, Jr., Richard Harrison, III — this comma is no longer regarded as necessary by most copy editors, and some individuals — such as Martin Luther King Jr. — never used a comma there at all.

Note that we use a comma or a set of commas to make the year parenthetical when the date of the month is included.

As you can see, there are many reasons for using commas, and we haven't listed them all. Yet the biggest problem that most students have with commas is their overuse. Some essays look as though the student loaded a shotgun with commas and blasted away. Remember, too, that a pause in reading is not always a reliable reason to use a comma. Try not to use a comma unless you can apply a specific rule from this page to do so.

Concentrating on the proper use of commas is not mere form for form's sake. Indeed, it causes writers to review their understanding of structure and to consider carefully how their sentences are crafted.

7.2.Semicolon.

In this century, at least, the semicolon has only two common uses: to separate the items in a list after a <u>colon</u> (as in "The following books will be covered on the midterm: the Odyssey, through book 12; passages from Ovid's Metamorphoses; and the selections from Chaucer"), and to separate two independent clauses in one sentence (as in "Shakespeare's comedies seem natural; his tragedies seem forced"). The first is obvious enough. For the second use, a simple test is this: if you can use a period and a new sentence, you can use a semicolon. In this second use, the semicolon can always be replaced by a period and a new sentence. In the example, "Shakespeare's comedies seem natural. His tragedies seem forced" is correct, so a semicolon can be used. It's unsafe to use a semicolon anywhere else.

8.Conjunction.

8.1.Coordinating Conjunctions

The short, simple conjunctions are called "coordinating conjunctions":
- and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so

A coordinating conjunction joins parts of a sentence (for example words or independent clauses) that are grammatically equal or similar. A coordinating conjunction shows that the elements it joins are similar in importance and structure.

When a coordinating conjunction joins independent clauses, it is always correct to place a comma before the conjunction. However, if the independent clauses are short and well-balanced, a comma is not really essential.

The 7 coordinating conjunctions are short, simple words. They have only two or three letters. There's an easy way to remember them - their initials spell:

F	A	N	B	O	Y	S
For	And	Nor	But	Or	Yet	So

Among the coordinating conjunctions, the most common, of course, are and, but, and or. It might be helpful to explore the uses of these three little words. The examples below by no means exhaust the possible meanings of these conjunctions.

8.2.<u>AND</u>

a. To suggest that one idea is chronologically sequential to another: "Tashonda sent in her applications <u>and</u> waited by the phone for a response."
b. To suggest that one idea is the result of another: "Willie heard the weather report <u>and</u> promptly boarded up his house."

c. To suggest that one idea is in contrast to another (frequently replaced by but in this usage): "Juanita is brilliant <u>and</u> Shalimar has a pleasant personality.

d. To suggest an element of surprise (sometimes replaced by yet in this usage): "Hartford is a rich city <u>and</u> suffers from many symptoms of urban blight."

e. To suggest that one clause is dependent upon another, conditionally (usually the first clause is an imperative): "Use your credit cards frequently <u>and</u> you'll soon find yourself deep in debt."

f. To suggest a kind of "comment" on the first clause: "Charlie became addicted to gambling — <u>and</u> that surprised no one who knew him."

8.3. BUT

a. To suggest a contrast that is unexpected in light of the first clause: "Joey lost a fortune in the stock market, <u>but</u> he still seems able to live quite comfortably."

b. To suggest in an affirmative sense what the first part of the sentence implied in a negative way (sometimes replaced by on the contrary): "The club never invested foolishly, <u>but</u> used the services of a sage investment counselor."

c. To connect two ideas with the meaning of "with the exception of" (and then the second word takes over as subject): "Everybody <u>but</u> Goldenbreath is trying out for the team."

8.4. OR

a. To suggest that only one possibility can be realized, excluding one or the other: "You can study hard for this exam <u>or</u> you can fail."

b. To suggest the inclusive combination of alternatives: "We can broil chicken on the grill tonight, <u>or</u> we can just eat leftovers.

c. To suggest a refinement of the first clause: "Smith College is the premier all-women's college in the country, <u>or</u> so it seems to most Smith College alumnae."

d. To suggest a restatement or "correction" of the first part of the sentence: "There are no rattlesnakes in this canyon, <u>or</u> so our guide tells us."

e. To suggest a negative condition: "The New Hampshire state motto is the rather grim "Live free <u>or</u> die."

f. To suggest a negative alternative without the use of an imperative (see use of and <u>above</u>): "They must approve his political style <u>or</u> they wouldn't keep electing him mayor."

8.5. SO

Be careful of the conjunction SO. Sometimes it can connect two independent clauses along with a comma, but sometimes it can't. For instance, in this sentence,

• Soto is not the only Olympic athlete in his family, so are his brother, sister, and his Uncle Chet.

where the word so means "as well" or "in addition," most careful writers would

use a semicolon between the two independent clauses. In the following sentence, where so is acting like a minor-league "therefore," the conjunction and the comma are adequate to the task:

- Soto has always been nervous in large gatherings, so it is no surprise that he avoids crowds of his adoring fans.

Sometimes, at the beginning of a sentence, so will act as a kind of summing up device or transition, and when it does, it is often set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma:

- So, the sheriff peremptorily removed the child from the custody of his parents.

8.6.FOR

The word FOR is most often used as a preposition, of course, but it does serve, on rare occasions, as a coordinating conjunction. Some people regard the conjunction for as rather highfalutin and literary, and it does tend to add a bit of weightiness to the text. Beginning a sentence with the conjunction "for" is probably not a good idea, except when you're singing "For he's a jolly good fellow. "For" has serious sequential implications and in its use the order of thoughts is more important than it is, say, with because or since. Its function is to introduce the reason for the preceding clause:

- John thought he had a good chance to get the job, for his father was on the company's board of trustees.
- Most of the visitors were happy just sitting around in the shade, for it had been a long, dusty journey on the train.

8.7.YET

The word YET functions sometimes as an adverb and has several meanings: in addition ("yet another cause of trouble" or "a simple yet noble woman"), even ("yet more expensive"), still ("he is yet a novice"), eventually ("they may yet win"), and so soon as now ("he's not here yet"). It also functions as a coordinating conjunction meaning something like "nevertheless" or "but." The word yet seems to carry an element of distinctiveness that but can seldom register.

- John plays basketball well, yet his favorite sport is badminton.
- The visitors complained loudly about the heat, yet they continued to play golf every day.

In sentences such as the second one, above, the pronoun subject of the second clause ("they," in this case) is often left out. When that happens, the comma preceding the conjunction might also disappear: "The visitors complained loudly yet continued to play golf every day."

Yet is sometimes combined with other conjunctions, but or and. It would not be unusual to see and yet in sentences like the ones above. This usage is acceptable.

8.8.Subordinating Conjunctions

The majority of conjunctions are "subordinating conjunctions". Common subordinating conjunctions are:

- after, although, as, because, before, how, if, once, since, than, that, though, till, until, when, where, whether, while

A subordinating conjunction joins a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main (independent) clause:

main or independent clause	subordinate or dependent clause	
Ram went swimming	although	it was raining.
	Subordinating conjunction	

A subordinating conjunction always comes at the beginning of a subordinate clause. It "introduces" a subordinate clause. However, a subordinate clause can sometimes come after and sometimes before a main clause. Thus, two structures are possible:

A subordinate or dependent clause "depends" on a main or independent clause. It cannot exist alone. Imagine that somebody says to you: "Hello! Although it was raining." What do you understand? Nothing! But a main or independent clause can exist alone. You will understand very well if somebody says to you: "Hello! Ram went swimming."

8.9.The Case of Like and As

Strictly speaking, the word like is a preposition, not a conjunction. It can, therefore, be used to introduce a prepositional phrase ("My brother is tall like my father"), but it should not be used to introduce a clause ("My brother can't play the piano like as he did before the accident" or "It looks like as if basketball is quickly overtaking baseball as America's national sport."). To introduce a clause, it's a good idea to use as, as though, or as if, instead. There should be no verb in the phrase right after like. Even in phrases such as "It looks like it's going to rain" or "It sounds like the motor's broken," as if is usually more appropriate than like — again, at least in formal writing. I trust I needn't comment on the barbarous, slack-jawed habit of using like as a verbal crutch: "It was just, like, y'know, like, really weird, like." (Actual sentence overheard on the New York City subway. If you use it in writing, though, you should be afflicted with plagues and boils. Shame on you.

- Like As I told you earlier, the lecture has been postponed.
- It looks like as if it's going to snow this afternoon.
- Johnson kept looking out the window like as though he had someone waiting for him.

In formal, academic text, it's a good idea to reserve the use of like for situations in which similarities are being pointed out:

- This community college is like a two-year liberal arts college.

However, when you are listing things that have similarities, such as is probably

more suitable:

- The college has several highly regarded neighbors, ~~like~~ such as the Mark Twain House, St. Francis Hospital, the Connecticut Historical Society, and the UConn Law School.

8.10.Omitting That

The word that is used as a conjunction to connect a subordinate clause to a preceding verb. In this construction that is sometimes called the "expletive that." Indeed, the word is often omitted to good effect, but the very fact of easy omission causes some editors to take out the red pen and strike out the conjunction that wherever it appears. In the following sentences, we can happily omit the that (or keep it, depending on how the sentence sounds to us):

- Isabel knew [that] she was about to be fired.
- She definitely felt [that] her fellow employees hadn't supported her.
- I hope [that] she doesn't blame me.

Sometimes omitting the that creates a break in the flow of a sentence, a break that can be adequately bridged with the use of a comma:

- The problem is, ~~that~~ production in her department has dropped.
- Remember, ~~that~~ we didn't have these problems before she started working here.

As a general rule, if the sentence feels just as good without the that, if no ambiguity results from its omission, if the sentence is more efficient or elegant without it, then we can safely omit the that. Theodore Bernstein lists <u>three conditions in which we should maintain the conjunction that</u>:

- When a time element intervenes between the verb and the clause: "The boss said yesterday <u>that</u> production in this department was down fifty percent." (Notice the position of "yesterday.")
- When the verb of the clause is long delayed: "Our annual report revealed <u>that</u> some losses sustained by this department in the third quarter of last year were worse than previously thought." (Notice the distance between the subject "losses" and its verb, "were.")
- When a second that can clear up who said or did what: "The CEO said that Isabel's department was slacking off and <u>that</u> production dropped precipitously in the fourth quarter." (Did the CEO say that production dropped or was the drop a result of what he said about Isabel's department? The second that makes the sentence clear.)

8.11.Beginning a Sentence with Because

Somehow, the notion that one should not begin a sentence with the subordinating conjunction because retains a mysterious grip on people's sense of writing proprieties. This might come about because a sentence that begins with because could well end up a fragment if one is not careful to follow up the "because clause" with an independent clause.

- Because e-mail now plays such a huge role in our communications industry.

When the "because clause" is properly subordinated to another idea (regardless of the position of the clause in the sentence), there is absolutely nothing wrong with it:

- Because e-mail now plays such a huge role in our communications industry, the postal service would very much like to see it taxed in some manner.

Unskillful writers often violate this principle, from a mistaken belief that they should constantly vary the form of their expressions. It is true that in repeating a statement in order to emphasize it writers may have need to vary its form. But apart from this, writers should follow carefully the principle of parallel construction

Faulty Parallelism: Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method, while now the laboratory method is employed.

Corrected Version: Formerly, science was taught by the textbook method; now it is taught by the laboratory method.

The use of the little conjunctions — especially and and but — comes naturally for most writers. However, the question whether one can begin a sentence with a small conjunction often arises. Isn't the conjunction at the beginning of the sentence a sign that the sentence should have been connected to the prior sentence? Well, sometimes, yes. But often the initial conjunction calls attention to the sentence in an effective way, and that's just what you want. Over-used, beginning a sentence with a conjunction can be distracting, but the device can add a refreshing dash to a sentence and speed the narrative flow of your text. Restrictions against beginning a sentence with and or but are based on shaky grammatical foundations; some of the most influential writers in the language have been happily ignoring such restrictions for centuries.

8.12.Common Subordinating Conjunctions

After- although- as- as if- as long as- as though- because- before- even if- even though- if- if only- in order that- now that- once- rather than- since- so that- than that- though- till- unless- until- when- whenever- where- whereas- wherever- while.

9.Miscellanies, hints and tips.

In formal academic writing, it is usually better to use many and much rather than phrases such as a lot of, lots of and plenty of.

There is an important difference between "a little" and "little" (used with non-count words) and between "a few" and "few" (used with count words). If I say that Tashonda has <u>a little experience</u> in management that means that although Tashonda is no great expert she does have some experience and that experience might well be enough for our purposes. If I say that Tashonda has <u>little experience</u> in management that means that she doesn't have enough experience. If I say that Charlie owns <u>a few books</u> on Latin American literature that means that he has some some books — not a lot of books, but probably enough for our purposes. If I say that Charlie owns

few books on Latin American literature, that means he doesn't have enough for our purposes and we'd better go to the library.

addition: again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too

comparison: also, in the same way, likewise, similarly

concession: granted, naturally, of course

contrast: although, and yet, at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet

emphasis: certainly, indeed, in fact, of course

example or illustration: after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly

summary: all in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize

time sequence: after a while, afterward, again, also, and then, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when.

Unless it is combined with of, the quantifier **"much"** is reserved for questions and negative statements:

- Much of the snow has already melted.
- How much snow fell yesterday?
- Not much.

Note that the quantifier **"most of the"** must include the definite article the when it modifies a specific noun, whether it's a count or a non-count noun: "most of the instructors at this college have a doctorate"; "most of the water has evaporated." With a general plural noun, however (when you are not referring to a specific entity), the "of the" is dropped:

- Most colleges have their own admissions policy.
- Most students apply to several colleges.

An indefinite article is sometimes used in conjunction with the quantifier many, thus joining a plural quantifier with a singular noun (which then takes a singular verb):

- Many a young man has fallen in love with her golden hair.
- Many an apple has fallen by October.

This construction lends itself to a somewhat literary effect (some would say a

stuffy or archaic effect) and is best used sparingly, if at all.

9.1. That versus Which.

According to the more quibbling self-styled grammar experts, that is restrictive, while which is not.

Many grammarians insist on a distinction without any historical justification. Many of the best writers in the language couldn't tell you the difference between them, while many of the worst think they know. If the subtle difference between the two confuses you, use whatever sounds right. Other matters are more worthy of your attention.

For the curious, however, the relative pronoun that is restrictive, which means it tells you a necessary piece of information about its antecedent: for example, "The word processor that is used most often is WordPerfect." Here the that phrase answers an important question: which of the many word processors are we talking about? And the answer is the one that is used most often.

Which is non-restrictive: it does not limit the word it refers to. An example is "Penn's ID center, which is called CUPID, has been successful so far." Here that is unnecessary: the which does not tell us which of Penn's many ID centers we're considering; it simply provides an extra piece of information about the plan we're already discussing. "Penn's ID Center" tells us all we really need to know to identify it.

It boils down to this: if you can tell which thing is being discussed without the which or that clause, use which; if you can't, use that.

There are two rules of thumb you can keep in mind. First, if the phrase needs a comma, you probably mean which. Since "Penn's ID center" calls for a comma, we would not say "Penn's ID Center, that is called CUPID."

Another way to keep them straight is to imagine by the way following every which: "Penn's ID center, which (by the way) is called CUPID. . . ." The which adds a useful, but not grammatically necessary, piece of information. On the other hand, we wouldn't say "The word processor which (by the way) is used most often is WordPerfect," because the word processor on its own isn't enough information — which word processor?

A paradoxical mnemonic: use that to tell which, and which to tell that.

9.2. Who versus Whom.

While it's possible to memorize a rule for distinguishing who from whom, it's easier to trust your ear. A simple test to see which is proper is to replace who/whom with he/him. If he sounds right, use who; if him is right, use whom. For example: since he did it and not him did it, use who did it; since we give something to him and not to he, use to whom. It gets tricky only when the preposition is separated from the who: Who/whom did you give it to? Rearrange the words in your head: "To whom did you give it?"

9.3. Than I versus Than Me.

Than, as used in comparatives, has traditionally been considered a conjunction; as such, if you're comparing subjects, the pronouns after than should take the "subjective case." In other words, "He's taller than I," not "He's taller than me"; "She's smarter than he," not "She's smarter than him." If, on the other hand, you're comparing direct or indirect objects, the pronouns should be objective: "I've never worked with a more difficult client than him."

There are some advantages to this traditional state of affairs. If you observe this distinction, you can be more precise in some comparisons. Consider these two sentences:

- He has more friends than I. (His total number of friends is higher than my total number of friends.)
- He has more friends than me. (I'm not his only friend; he has others.)

The problem, though, is that in all but the most formal contexts, "than I" sounds stuffy, even unidiomatic. Most people, in most contexts, treat than as a preposition, and put all following pronouns in the objective case, whether the things being compared are subjects or objects. "He's taller than me" sounds more natural to most native English speakers.

This isn't a recent development: people have been treating than as a preposition for centuries. Consider the following from big-name English and American writers:

- Matthew Prior, Better Answer: "For thou art a girl as much brighter than her,/ As he was a poet sublimer than me."
- Samuel Richardson's Clarissa, I. x. 58, "I am fitter for this world than you, you for the next than me."
- Lord Byron's letter of 2 November 1804, "Lord Delawarr is considerably younger than me."
- Robert Southey, Well of St. Keyne, 51: "She had been wiser than me,/ For she took a bottle to Church."
- William Faulkner's Reivers, IV, 82: "Let Lucius get out . . . He's younger than me and stouter too for his size."

So what should you do? I don't have a good answer, other than the most general advice possible: try to size up your audience, and figure out whether they're likely to be happier with the traditional or the familiar usage.

9.4. Shall versus Will.

An old distinction, more common in British than in American English, still comes up from time to time. To wit: will is usually the simple future indicative: "This will happen," "You will be surprised." Shall is related to the subjunctive, and means "Let it be so," which you might see in legal or business writing: "The employee shall produce all required documentation," "A committee shall be appointed," and so forth. (They're not just predicting that the employee's going to do it or the committee is going to form; they're declaring that they must, or at least should, happen.) But this rule

works only for the second person (you) and the third person (he, she, it, they). The first person — I and we — reverses the rule, so "I shall do it" means I'm going to get around to it, while "I will do it" shows a mustering of resolve (let it be so).

A favorite example to clarify the two: "I shall drown, no one will save me!" is a cry of despair, simply predicting imminent death — both are simple futures. "I will drown, no one shall save me!" is a suicide vow, a declaration that no one had better try to stop me.

I know, it's confusing, but it's nothing to worry about. Just don't throw shall around unless you know what you're doing.

9.5. Each.

A singular noun, which requires a singular verb. Do not write "Each of the chapters have a title"; use "Each of the chapters has a title" or (better) "Each chapter has a title."

9.6. Every.

Every requires a singular verb and singular pronouns. Do not write "Every one of the papers have been graded"; use "Every one of the papers has been graded" or (better) "Every paper has been graded." Ditto everyone: "Everyone must sign his or her name," not "their name."

9.7. Every Day versus Everyday.

Keep 'em straight: everyday (one word) is an adjective, and means "normal, quotidian, occurring every day, not out of the ordinary." Other senses should be two words. So: an everyday event happens every day.

9.8. E.g. versus i.e.

The abbreviation e.g. is for the Latin exempli gratia, "for example." I.e., Latin id est, means "that is." They're not interchangeable. Both abbreviations should be followed by a comma.

9.9. Alright. Two words — all right

9.10. Also.

Avoid beginning sentences with also. There's nothing illegal about it, but it tends to make your writing inelegant.

9.11. Among versus Between.

The simple rule will rarely fail you: use between for two things, among for more than two.

9.12.Cannot. Always one word, even in <u>formal</u> contexts where you don't see many other <u>contractions</u>.

9.13.Continual versus Continuous.

Continual means "happening over and over again"; continuous means "happening constantly without stopping." If you're continually on the Internet, it means you keep going on; if you're continuously on the Internet, it means you haven't gone off at all.
Farther versus Further.
Though very few people bother with the difference these days, there is a traditional distinction: farther applies to physical distance, further to metaphorical distance. You travel farther, but pursue a topic further. Don't get upset if you can't keep it straight; no one will notice.

9.14.Less versus Fewer.

Less means "not as much"; fewer means "not as many." Trust your ear: if you'd use "much," use "less"; if you'd use "many," use "fewer." You earn less money by selling fewer products; you use less oil but eat fewer fries. If you can count them, use fewer.

9.15.Imply versus Infer.

A speaker implies something by hinting at it; a listener infers something from what he or she hears. Don't use them interchangeably.

9.16.It Can Be Argued.

Aw, c'mon: anything can be argued. Don't <u>pad</u> your writing with useless stuff like this, especially when it's <u>graceless</u>, <u>imprecise</u>, and in the <u>passive voice</u>.

9.17.Necessitate.

<u>Ugly</u> business jargon. If you mean require, say require or rework the sentence so that necessitate is not necessitated.

9.18.Phenomena. A <u>plural</u> noun: the singular is phenomenon.

9.19.Apostrophe.

The most common way to form a possessive in English is with apostrophe and s: "a hard day's night." After a <u>plural</u> noun ending in s, put just an apostrophe: "two hours' work" (i.e., "the work of two hours"). If a plural doesn't end in s — children, men, people — plain old apostrophe-s: "children's," "men's," "people's." It's never "mens'" or "childrens'."
There's also the opposite case: when a singular noun ends in s. That's a little

trickier. Most style guides prefer s's: James's house. Plain old s-apostrophe (as in James' house) is common in journalism, but most other publishers prefer James's.

9.20.Little lexicon

approval of, awareness of, belief in, concern for, confusion about, desire for, fondness for, grasp of, hatred of, hope for, interest in, love of, need for, participation in, reason for, respect for, success in, understanding of, afraid of, angry at, aware of, capable of, careless about, familiar with, fond of, happy about, interested in, jealous of, made of, married to, proud of, similar to, sorry for, sure of, tired of, worried about, apologize for, ask about, ask for, belong to, bring up, care for, find out, give up, grow up, look for, look forward to, look up, make up, pay for, prepare for, study for, talk about, think about, trust in, work for, worry about.

Proofreading.

You should always read over your wrok carefully before handing it to someone esle, looking for typoos, mispelled words, problems with agreement, words that missing, and so on. There's nothing wrong with using a spelling checker, but they routinely miss so many things that you still hav to read your work closlly. (Don't depend on grammar checkers, which usually makes your writing worse, not better.) Remember, though, that proofreading is only one part of the revision process.

10.Appendix

10.1.Can

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
can general ability	1. I can speak Chinese 2. SHIFTS TO "COULD" I could speak Chinese when I was a kid. 3. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" I will be able to speak Chinese by the time I finish my course.	1. I can't speak Swahili. 2. SHIFTS TO "COULD" I couldn't speak Swahili. 3. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" I won't be able to speak Swahili.	to be able
can ability during a specific event	1. With a burst of adrenaline, people can pick up cars. 2. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" With a sudden burst of adrenaline, he was able to lift the car off the child's leg. 3. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" With a sudden burst of adrenaline, he will be able to lift the car.	1. People can't pick up cars. 2. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" Even the weight lifter, couldn't lift the car off the child's leg. 3. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" Even three men working together won't be able to lift the car.	to be able
can opportunity	1. I have some free time. I can help her now. 2. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" I had some free time yesterday. I was able to help her at that time. 3. I'll have some free time tomorrow. I can help her then.	1. I don't have any time. I can't help her now. 2. SHIFTS TO "BE ABLE TO" I didn't have time yesterday. I wasn't able to help her at that time. 3. I won't have any time later. I can't help her then.	to be able
can permission	1. I can drive Susan's car when she is out of town. 2. SHIFTS TO "BE ALLOWED" I was allowed to drive Susan's car while she was out of town last week. 3. I can drive Susan's car while she is out of town next week.	1. I can't drive Susan's car when she is out of town. 2. SHIFTS TO "BE ALLOWED" I wasn't allowed to drive Susan's car while she was out of town last week. 3. I can't drive Susan's car while she is out of town next week.	may
can request	Can I have a glass of water? Can you give me a lift to school? (Requests usually refer to the near future.)	Can't I have a glass of water? Can't you give me a lift to school? (Requests usually refer to the near future.)	could may
can possibility / impossibility	Anyone can become rich and famous if they know the right people. Learning a language can be a real challenge. (This use is usually a generalization or an supposition.)	It can't cost more than a dollar or two. You can't be 45! I thought you were about 18 years old. (This use is usually a generalization or an supposition.)	could

10.2.Could

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
could possibility	1. John could be the one who stole the money. 2. John could have been the one who stole the money. 3. John could be charged with the crime when the police finish the investigation.	1. Mary couldn't be the one who stole the money. 2. Mary couldn't have been the one who stole the money. 3. Mary couldn't possibly be charge with the crime after the police examine the evidence.	might, may
could conditional (can, could)	1. If I had more time, I could travel around the world. 2. If I had had more time, I could have traveled around the world. 3. If I had more time this winter, I could travel around the world.	1. Even if I had more time, I couldn't travel around the world. 2. Even if I had had more time, I couldn't have traveled around the world. 3. Even if I had more time this winter, I could travel around the world.	
could suggestion	1. NO PRESENT FORM 2. You could have spent your vacation in Hawaii. 3. You could spend your vacation in Hawaii.	NO NEGATIVE FORMS	
could past ability	I could run ten miles in my twenties. I could speak Chinese when I was a kid.	I couldn't run more than a mile in my twenties. I couldn't speak Swahili.	be able to
could polite request	Could I have something to drink? Could borrow your stapler? (Requests usually refer to the near future.)	Couldn't he come with us? Couldn't you help me with this for just a second? (Requests usually refer to the near future.)	can, may, might

10.3.Had Better

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
had better recommendation	1. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" OR "OUGHT TO" People should unplug toasters before they clean them. 2. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" OR "OUGHT TO" You should have unplugged the toaster before you tried to clean it. 3. You had better unplug the toaster before you try to clean it.	1. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" OR "OUGHT TO" People shouldn't clean toasters without unplugging them first. 2. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" OR "OUGHT TO" You shouldn't have cleaned the toaster without unplugging it first. 3. You had better not clean the toaster until you unplug it.	should, ought to
had better desperate hope/ warning	The movie had better end soon. They had better be here before we start dinner. (Desperate hopes and warnings usually refer to the near future.)	They had better not be late. They had better not forget Tom's birthday gift. (Desperate hopes and warnings usually refer to the near future.)	
"Had better" is often simply pronounced as "better" in spoken English.			

10.4.Have to

Modal Use	1. Present 2. Past 3. Future	Negative Forms	You can also use:
have to certainty	1. That has to be Jerry. They said he was tall with bright red hair. 2. That has to have been the right restaurant. There are no other restaurants on this street. 3. NONE	1. SHIFTS TO "MUST" That must not have been Jerry we saw. He was supposed to have red hair. 2. SHIFTS TO "MUST" That must not have been the right restaurant. I guess there is another one around here somewhere. 3. NONE	must, have got to
have to necessity	1. She has to read four books for this literature class. 2. She had to finish the first book before the midterm. 3. She will have to finish the other books before the final exam.	1. She doesn't have to read "Grapes of Wrath." It's optional reading for extra credit. 2. She didn't have to write a critique of "The Scarlet Letter." She had to give a presentation to her class. 3. She won't have to take any other literature classes. American Literature 101 is the only required course.	must
don't have to choice/ no obligation	1. I don't have to take any tests. The course is just for fun. 2. I didn't have to take the test. The teacher let me do a report instead. 3. I won't have to take the test. It's going to be for extra credit and I don't need the points.		

REMEMBER: "Do not have to" vs. "Must not"
"Do not have to" suggests that someone is not required to do something. "Must not" suggests that you are prohibited from doing something.

10.5.Have Got to

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
have got to necessity	1. People have got to be on time if they want to get a seat in the crowded theater. 2. SHIFT TO "HAVE TO" You had to be on time if you wanted to get a seat in the crowded theater. 3. You have got to be there on time tonight if you want to get a seat in the crowded theater.	1. SHIFT TO "DON'T HAVE TO" People don't have to be there on time to get a seat. 2. SHIFT TO "DON'T HAVE TO" You didn't have to be there on time to get a seat. 3. SHIFT TO "DON'T HAVE TO" You won't have to be there on time to get a seat.	have to, must
haven't got to future obligation	Haven't you got to be there by 7:00? Haven't you got to finish that project today? ("Haven't got to" is primarily used to ask about future obligations. It can be used in statements, but this is less common.)		Don't you, have to

10.6.May

Modal Use	1. Present 2. Past 3. Future	Negative Forms	You can also use:
may possibility	1. Jack may be upset. I can't really tell if he is annoyed or tired. 2. Jack may have been upset. I couldn't really tell if he was annoyed or tired. 3. Jack may get upset if you don't tell him the truth.	1. Jack may not be upset. Perhaps he is tired. 2. Jack may not have been upset. Perhaps he was tired. 3. Jack may not get upset, even if you tell him the truth	might
may permission	1. You may leave the table now that you're finished with your dinner. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ALLOWED TO" You were allowed to leave the table after you finished your dinner. 3. You may leave the table when you finish your dinner.	1. You may not leave the table. You're not finished with your dinner yet. 2. SHIFT TO "HAVE TO" You were not allowed to leave the table because you hadn't finished your dinner. 3. You may not leave the table until you are finished with your dinner.	can
may requests	May I borrow your eraser. May I make a phone call. (Requests usually refer to the near future.)	NO NEGATIVE FORM	can, might

10.7.Might

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
might possibility	1. She might be on the bus. I think her car is having problems. 2. She might have taken the bus. I'm not sure how she got to work. 3. She might take the bus to get home. I don't think Bill will be able to give her a ride.	1. She might not be on the bus. She might be walking home. 2. She might not have taken the bus. She might have walked home. 3. She might not take the bus. She might get a ride from Bill.	could, may
might conditional (may, might)	1. If I entered the contest, I might actually win. 2. If I had entered the contest, I might actually have won. 3. If I entered the contest tomorrow, I might actually win. Unfortunately, I can't enter it.	1. Even if I entered the contest, I might not win. 2. Even if I had entered the contest, I might not have won. 3. Even if I entered the contest tomorrow, I might not win.	
might suggestion	1. NO PRESENT FORM 2. You might have tried the cheese cake. 3. You might try the cheesecake.	1. NO PRESENT FORM 2. PAST FORM UNCOMMON 3. You might not want to eat the cheese cake. It's very calorific.	could
might request (British form)	Might I have something to drink? Might I borrow the stapler? (Requests usually refer to the near future.)	NEGATIVE FORMS UNCOMMON	could, may, can

REMEMBER: "Might not" vs. "Could not"
"Might not" suggests you do not know if something happens. "Could not" suggests that it is impossible for something to happen.

10.8.Must

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
must certainty	1. That must be Jerry. They said he was tall with bright red hair. 2. That must have been the right restaurant. There are no other restaurants on this street. 3. NO FUTURE FORM	1. That must not be Jerry. He is supposed to have red hair. 2. That must not have been the right restaurant. I guess there is another one around here somewhere. 3. NO FUTURE FORM	have to
must not prohibition	You must not swim in that river. It's full of crocodiles. You must not forget to take your malaria medication while your are in the tropics. (Prohibition usually refer to the near future.)		
must strong recommendatio n (Americans prefer the form "should.")	1. You must take some time off and get some rest. 2. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" You should have taken some time off last week to get some rest. 3. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" You should take some time off next week to get some rest.	1. You mustn't drink so much. It's not good for your health. 2. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" You shouldn't have drunk so much. That caused the accident. 3. SHIFT TO "SHOULD" You shouldn't drink at the party. You are going to be the designated driver.	should
must necessity (Americans prefer the form "have to.")	1. You must have a permit to enter the national park. 2. SHIFT TO "HAVE TO" We had to have a permit to enter the park. 3. We must get a permit to enter the park next week.	1. SHIFT TO "HAVE TO" We don't have to get a permit to enter the national park. 2. SHIFT TO "HAVE TO" We didn't have to get a permit to enter the national park. 3. SHIFT TO "HAVE TO" We won't have to get a permit to enter the national park.	have to

10.9.Ought to

Modal Use	1. Present 2. Past 3. Future	Negative Forms	You can also use:
ought to recommendation/ advisability	1. Margaret ought to exercise more. 2. Margaret ought to have exercised more so she would be better prepared for the marathon. 3. Margaret ought to come to the fitness center with us tonight.	1. Margaret ought not exercise too much. It might cause injury. 2. Margaret ought not have run the marathon. She wasn't in good shape. 3. Margaret ought not stay at home in front of the TV. She should go to the fitness center with us.	should
ought to assumption/ expectation/ probability	1. She ought to have the package by now. 2. She ought to have received the package yesterday. 3. She ought to receive the package tonight.	"Ought not" is used primarily to express negative recommendation.	should
ought not (Americans prefer "should not".)	Margaret ought not exercise too much. (Notice that there is no "to" in the negative form.)		

37

10.10.Should

Modal Use	1. **Present** 2. **Past** 3. **Future**	Negative Forms	You can also use:
should recommendation advisability	1. People with high cholesterol should eat low fat foods. 2. Frank should have eaten low fat foods. That might have prevented his heart attack. 3. You really should start eating better.	1. Sarah shouldn't smoke so much. It's not good for her health. 2. Sarah shouldn't have smoked so much. That's what caused her health problems. 3. Sarah shouldn't smoke when she visits Martha next week. Martha hates when people smoke in her house.	ought to
should obligation	I should be at work before 9:00. We should return the video before the video rental store closes. ("Should" can also express something between recommendation and obligation. "Be supposed to" expresses a similar idea and can easily be used in the past or in negative forms.)	NO NEGATIVE FORMS	be supposed, to
should assumption/ expectation/ probability	1. Susan should be in New York by now. 2. Susan should have arrived in New York last week. Let's call her and see what she is up to. 3. Susan should be in New York by next week. Her new job starts on Monday.	1. Susan shouldn't be in New York yet. 2. Susan shouldn't have arrived in New York until yesterday. 3. Susan shouldn't arrive in New York until next week.	ought to, be supposed to

10.11.Shall

Modal Use	1. Present 2. Past 3. Future	Negative Forms	You can also use:
shall future action (British form)	The marketing director shall be replaced by someone from the New York office. Fred shall be there by 8:00.	The marketing director shall not be replaced after all. Fred shall not be there. He has a previous obligation.	will
shall volunteering / promising (British form)	I shall take care of everything for you. I shall make the travel arrangements. There's no need to worry.	I shall never forget you. I shall never give up the fight for freedom.	will
shall inevitability (British form)	Man shall explore the distant regions of the universe. We shall overcome oppression.	Man shall never give up the exploration of the universe. He shall not be held back.	

10.12.Will

Modal Use	1. Present 2. Past 3. Future	Negative Forms	You can also use:
will future action/ prediction	The marketing director will be replaced by someone from the New York office. Fred will be there by 8:00.	The marketing director will not be replaced after all. Fred will not be there. He has a previous obligation.	shall
will volunteering / promising	I will take care of everything for you. I will make the travel arrangements. There's no need to worry.	I will never forget you. I will never give up the fight for freedom.	shall

10.13.Would

Modal Use	1. Present 2. Past 3. Future	Negative Forms	You can also use:
would conditional	1. If I were President, I would cut the cost of education. 2. If I had been President, I would have cut the cost of education. 3. If I were elected President next year, I would cut the cost of education.	1. If I were President, I would not raise taxes. 2. If I had been President, I would not have raised taxes. 3. If I were President, I would not sign the tax increase next week.	
would past of will	I said I would help you. He told me he would be here before 8:00.	I said I wouldn't help you. He told me he would not be here before 8:00.	
would repetition in past	When I was a kid, I would always go to the beach. When he was young, he would always do his homework.	When I was a kid, I wouldn't go into the water by myself. When he got older, he would never do his homework.	used to